Ibn Taymiyyah

كتاب الإيمان

KITAB AL-IMAN

BOOK OF FAITH

Translated by
Salman Hassan Al-Ani
Shadia Ahmad Tel

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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To the Memory of
Our Beloved Parents

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Introduction

Ibn Taymiyyah and *Kitab Al-Iman*

This volume is the first complete English translation of the important and well-known *Kitab al-Iman* by the renowned thirteenth-century Muslim scholar Ibn Taymiyyah. The Book of Faith was an attempt to explain the concept of Iman which, throughout its history, has been one of the cornerstone aspects of Islam. Iman has served to define the nature of Muslim life and the essence of the religion as a whole. During Ibn Taymiyyah's lifetime, and for a few centuries before, the concept of Iman became a major point of controversy among rival Islamic sects, each of which advocated their own interpretation of its nature. Ibn Taymiyyah's own deep conviction and understanding of this concept is based on the true interpretation of the Qur'ān, ḥadith, *sayings and deeds* of the Prophet Muḥammad peace be upon him (pbuh) and the conduct of the pious ancestors of the first three Islamic centuries. Throughout history the concept of Iman developed into a major undertaking theologically, linguistically, and even politically. From the beginning Ibn Taymiyyah stated that he did not want to be involved in the dispute concerning the concept of Iman that was raised and discussed by the various Islamic sects. This introduction intends to give a brief and precise biography of Ibn Taymiyyah to highlight the principle ideas presented in *Kitab al-Iman,* and to identify its various recensions.

IBN TAYMIYYAH: HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER

Ibn Taymiyyah (Taqī al-Dīn Abu al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah)[1] was born in Ḥarrān, Syria on 10 Rabīʿ I 661/22 January 1263. When

[1] There are two references that attempt to explain the name Taymiyyah. Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī, in his book *al-ʿUqūd al-Durriyyah,* Cairo, 1983, mentioned that the great grandfather of Ibn Taymiyyah, Muḥammad Ibn al-Khiḍir, stopped at Taymāʿ in

he was about six years old, his family fled to Damascus as the Mongols were preparing to invade his home town Ḥarrān. The family traveled at night with their bare essentials, mostly books, and hid during the day. His father, Shihāb al-Dīn Abu al-Maḥāsin ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm (d. 682/1283), was a learned man from a family that was long recognized as a house of learning and that traditionally belonged to the Ḥanbalī Madhhab, *school of law*. Upon arriving in Damascus his father established himself as a respectable scholar and later became the Shaykh of ḥadith studies at the renowned Sukkariyyah Madrasah, *school,* where he resided with his son, Taqī al-Din. In addition to his father, Ibn Taymiyyah's teachers included Shams al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisī (d. 682/1283), who was the first Ḥanbalī to hold the prestigious position of Qāḍī al-Quḍāt, *chief judge*, in Syria.

The young Ibn Taymiyyah was blessed with a sharp memory and acute intelligence "as if Allah had bestowed upon him the gift of fast and lasting memorization."[2] At a very early age he memorized the Qurʾān; he also studied and memorized large portions of ḥadith with his father, who specialized in the subject. Among the books of ḥadith he studied were the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim as well as other major collections, such as the *Musnad* of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. He also thoroughly studied the Ḥanbalī Madhhab and the doctrines of other schools of jurisprudence. One subject in which he was especially interested was the Arabic language, focusing on both prose and poetry. In addition, he was guided by Sībawayh's *al-Kitab* and also studied tafsīr, *interpretation,* of the Qurʾān. Although he was particularly interested in the history and opinions of the pious ancestors, especially those of the first four Orthodox Caliphs, he also studied such diverse subjects as mathematics, Sufism, and different Islamic sects.

northwest Arabia on his way to pilgrimage. There he saw a baby girl. When he returned home he found his wife had given birth to a baby girl and he said: "Yā Taymiyyah, Yā Taymiyyah," *Oh Taymiyyah, Oh Taymiyyah,* thus the great grandfather received the nickname Taymiyyah. According to Ibn al-Najjār, another explanation of the name (on page 4 of the same book), is that the great grandfather's mother's name was Taymiyyah. She was an elderly pious woman and thus the family was named after her. The same information is related in a footnote by Muḥammad Abu Zahrah in his book *Ibn Taymiyyah: His Life and Times* (17). Reference will be made to this book throughout the text as Abu Zahrah.

[2] ʿUmar Ibn ʿAlī al-Bazzār, *al-Aʿlām al-ʿAliyyah fī Manāqib Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah,(al-Aʿlām),* edited by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, Beirut, 1976, p. 22.

Those early intellectual pursuits contributed a great deal to his future lectures and writings.[3]

Ibn Taymiyyah remained close to the members of his immediate family, and his father continued to be his mentor and teacher until his death. He was kind to his mother, Sitt al-Munʿim bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥarrāniyyah, who was known for her piety, and lived a long life after the death of her husband. She died in 716/1316. Ibn Taymiyyah's affection for his mother is evidenced by several endearing letters that he wrote to her while in Egypt. Her influence over her son lasted throughout her long life.[4] Ibn Taymiyyah's brothers were also learned scholars and remained close to him, especially during his several miḥan, *trials*. When he was in prison, in both Cairo and Damascus, one brother was always there to take care of him.

After his father's death, Ibn Taymiyyah, at the age of twenty-two, assumed the respected teaching position formerly held by his father at the Sukkariyyah Madrasah. Among those present at his first lesson at this renowned center of learning were notable scholars such as the chief Qāḍī, Ibn al-Zakī al-Shāfiʿī, and Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Fazārī, who was so impressed by the content and delivery of Ibn Taymiyyah's lesson that he recorded it in his own handwriting. From this young age until his death, Ibn Taymiyyah's scholarly contributions continued to grow and resulted in numerous books and treatises. Many consider Ibn Taymiyyah as the second most famous Ḥanbalī theologian and jurisconsult after Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), the founder of the Ḥanbalī Madhab, *school of law*.[5] During his lifetime Ibn Taymiyyah adhered so strongly to his views and

[3] See Abu Zahrah, pp. 20–28; al-Bazzār, pp. 21–22; and Victor E. Makarī, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: The Social Factor,* Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983, pp. 21–29.

[4] Henri Laoust, "Ibn Taymiyyah's Academic Life and His Thoughts" (in Arabic), *Mahrajān,* in *Usbūʿ al-Fiqh al-Islāmi,* p. 832.

[5] The basic sources used in this work for the background of the life and character of Ibn Taymiyyah are the following: Muḥammad Abu Zahrah's *Ibn Taymiyyah;* Mahrajān in *Usbūʿ al-Fiqh al-Islāmi;* Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī's *al-ʿUqūd al-Durriyyah min Manāqib Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (al-ʿUqūd);* H. Laoust's *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Takī-D-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taimī a,* Cairo, 1939; also Laoust in *Encyclopedia o f Islam,* 2d ed., Leiden, Brill (EI.2), vol. 3, pp. 951–55; ʿUmar Ibn ʿAlī al-Bazzār's *al-Aʿlām al-ʿAliyyah fī Manāqib Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah,(al-Aʿlām)* edited by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjad, Beirut, 1976; and Ibn Kathīr's *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh (al-Bidāyah),* vols. 13–14, Beirut, 1987. In addition, the introductions to the various copies of *Kitab al-Iman* were also utilized. A list of these books appears at the end of this introduction.

opinions that most of the people of his time in both Syria and Egypt, especially scholars of the different sects and madhabs, became either ardent supporters or staunch opponents. Included among the latter were some of the Mamlūk rulers of Egypt and Syria.

Ibn Taymiyyah's style of teaching was intended to instruct the people about the basic tenants of Islam, emphasizing the Qur'ān and the Sunnah as the primary foundation of the Islamic religion and the Sharī'ah. He thus had a large following among the masses, both in Syria and Egypt. During the long period of his active life he also gave special lectures to small groups of his followers. Two distinguished students emerged from these groups. Perhaps the most celebrated was Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (691/1292–751/1350), who was so close to Ibn Taymiyyah that occasionally they were even imprisoned together. After the death of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim continued actively lecturing and writing in the same basic manner as his teacher, but with a much calmer approach. He wrote several important works, one of which is *Madārij al-Sālkīn,* in three volumes.[6] This work is considered one of the best documents on Ḥanbalī thought. The other distinguished student was 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl Ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr (700/1300–774/1373), a good friend of Ibn Taymiyyah who, even though he was a Shāfi'ī, fell under the influence of his teacher. Ibn Kathīr is considered one of the greatest historians. This is clearly demonstrated by his renowned book *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*. The latest edition was published in 1987 in 14 vols.[7]

THE MIḤAN, *TRIALS,* OF IBN TAYMIYYAH

The period in which Ibn Taymiyyah lived witnessed political, social, and religious unrest. In fact, one of the greatest blows was directed against the institution of the Caliphate, which emerged only a few years before the birth of Ibn Taymiyyah. During the fall of Baghdad in 656/1258, the Mongols under Hulagu wreaked mass destruction and brutal murder throughout the city and the area around it. This calamity, which also brought about the death of the 'Abbāsid Caliph and the

[6] Laoust, *EI* 2 (Ibn Kathīr), vol. 3, pp. 817–18 and Abu Zahrah, pp. 526–28.

[7] Laoust, *EI* 2 (Ibn Ḳayyim al-Djawziyya), vol. 3, pp. 821–22 and Abu Zahrah, pp. 527–28.

suspension of the Caliphate for several years, brought chaos to the ummah, *Muslim community,* throughout the lifetime of Ibn Taymiyyah.[8]

In his writing Ibn Taymiyyah followed the Ḥanbalite school of thought and many times came into direct conflict with the prevailing religious scholars. "As a class they [the religious scholars] were nearly all mainly interested in their own promotion in their academic or judicial careers; and, since promotion was in the hands of the rulers, they were subservient to the rulers. Ibn Taymiyyah, following in the tradition of Ibn Ḥanbal, stood up for what he believed to be right, regardless of the suffering it might bring upon him personally."[9] Undoubtedly Ibn Taymiyyah encountered more than his share of trouble throughout his active life.

In the year 693/1293 an unusual event took place. Ibn Taymiyyah took a public stand against a Christian from Suwaydā' named ʿAssāf al-Naṣrānī who, some people testified, had cursed the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh). Ibn Taymiyyah's intransigence led to his imprisonment for a short period. Later that year ʿAssāf became a Muslim and on his way to Ḥijāz, near Madinah, was killed by his own nephew. Also in 693/1293, Ibn Taymiyyah wrote his book *al-Ṣārim al-Maslūl ʿalā Shātim al-Rasūl.*[10]

Some people in the city of Ḥamāt in Syria asked Ibn Taymiyyah to write on the question of the attributes of Allah and in 698/1298 he produced a treatise known as *al-Ḥamawiyyah al-Kubrā.* His ideas in this treatise apparently disagreed with the position of certain scholars in Damascus, particularly the Ashʿarites, who accused him of tashbīh, *anthropomorphism,* with regard to his interpretation of those attributes. The Ayyūbids, who ruled over Syria and Egypt before Ibn Taymiyyah's time, were great supporters of the Ashʿarites, who based their argument on philosophical reasoning, in contrast to Ibn Taymiyyah's theology, which was based more directly on the teachings of the pious ancestors. A council of jurists, set up to examine the accusations against Ibn Taymiyyah, decided that

[8] Ibn Kathīr, vol. 13, pp. 213–26, Laoust, (*EI* 2) and Laoust's *Essai.*

[9] Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985, p. 142.

[10] Ibn Kathīr, vol. 13, p. 355 and Laoust (EI.2), p. 951.

the *Ḥamawiyyah* contained nothing contradictory to the Qur'ān or the Sunnah and therefore vindicated him of any wrongdoing.[11]

Some of Ibn Taymiyyah's enemies, however, intensified their attacks and succeeded in influencing the authorities in Damascus to hold a council on what became known as the al-Wāsiṭiyyah,[12] a treatise that Ibn Taymiyyah wrote on the request of a man from the city of Wāṣit in Iraq. The treatise, as became obvious, adhered to traditional Islamic teachings and, as a result, his enemies raised some questions about his religious views. Two other councils were held on the same account, but in both cases he again was vindicated. However, the matter did not stop there and he was summoned to Cairo by the Sultan of Egypt.

Against the advice of his close friends and the viceroy in Damascus, Ibn Taymiyyah was determined to go to Cairo and face the consequences. His trip to Egypt in 705/1305 was full of the triumphs and tribulations that he experienced throughout his life. Upon his arrival in Cairo the council of judges of the different ma<u>dh</u>abs, *schools,* met with Ibn Taymiyyah at the Citadel. The Mālikī, *chief judge,* Ibn Ma<u>kh</u>lūf, a strong opponent of Ibn Taymiyyah's Ḥanbalī way of thinking and teaching, would not allow him to defend himself. A decree issued by the council resulted in the imprisonment of Ibn Taymiyyah and two of his brothers for almost two years. During this period the Ḥanbalīs, in both Egypt and Syria, were treated harshly and some were even imprisoned.

Upon Ibn Taymiyyah's release from prison he was allowed to return to Syria on the condition that he refrain from openly attacking rational thinking, Sufism, and other nontraditional Islamic thinking. He declined this offer, however, and was once again imprisoned several months later, this time in Alexandria, although he was released and honored soon afterward when the Sultan, Malik al-Nāṣir

[11] Al-ʿUqūd, pp. 132–37; Watts, p. 143; Laoust (EI.2), p. 951; and Qamar-ud-Dīn Khan, *The Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyyah.* Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1973, pp. 3–4. Sherman Jackson, in an article entitled "Ibn Taymiyyah on Trial in Damascus," translates a "memoir written by Ibn Taymiyyah himself." This translation is a well-documented account of the Damascus trial. Published in *Journal of Semitic Studies,* vol. 39.1, 1994, pp. 41–85.

[12] For further details, see Merlin Swartz's translation of this treatise, with brief introductory remarks, entitled "A Seventh-Century (A.H.) Sunnī Creed: The ʿAqīda Wāsiṭīya of Ibn Taymīya," *Humanioura Islamica* I, eds. H. W. Mason, R. L. Nettler, and J. Waardenburg. The Hague: Mouton, 1973, pp. 91–103.

Muḥammad Ibn Qalawūn, regained his authority in Egypt in 710/1311. The Sultan had great respect for Ibn Taymiyyah as both a person and a scholar. The next two years that Ibn Taymiyyah spent in Egypt were probably the happiest and most productive of his life. During this period he wrote one of his most important treatises, *Kitab al-Siyāsah al-Sharʿiyyah.* In the year 712/1313 he returned to Damascus.[13]

In Damascus he continued writing, teaching, and issuing fatwās, *formal legal opinions*. Some of these fatwās agitated Ibn Taymiyyah's opponents and they began to criticize him. Still, it was his fatwā on divorce, which contradicted even the Ḥanbalī's prevailing doctrine on this matter, that landed him in prison again by order of the Sultan. After about five months, again by order of the Sultan, he was released from prison.

Other incidents occurred when Ibn Taymiyyah wrote his treatise concerning ziyārat al-qubūr, *visits to tombs.* In 726/1326, because of this treatise and his incessant issuing of fatwās on various matters, he was arrested and held in the Citadel of Damascus without trial until his death on 20 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 728/26 September 1328. During the last few months of his life he was forbidden to have paper, ink, or anything with which to write. However, his brother, Zayn al-Dīn, was allowed to take care of him in prison. Ibn Kathīr gives a detailed, emotional description of Ibn Taymiyyah's death and funeral in which he asserts that the whole city of Damascus, even women and children, took part in the funeral procession.[14] Ibn Taymiyyah is buried in a small graveyard on the southern edge of the campus at the University of Damascus. On his marble tombstone is written: "Here lies Shaykh al-Islam Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah, 728 A.H."[15]

THE OBJECTIVES OF KITAB AL-IMAN

Ibn Taymiyyah's main objective in writing *Kitab al-Iman* was to explain the concept of Iman and to correct its prevailing misconceptions. He wanted to explain the concept of Iman in accordance with and on the basis of the Qurʾān and

[13] The seven years that Ibn Taymiyyah spent in Egypt is fully detailed by Ibn Kathīr, vol. 14, pp. 37–70; Abu Zahrah, pp. 49–75; and Laoust (EI.2).

[14] Ibn Kathīr, vol. 14, pp. 141–45.

[15] Adnān al-Khaṭīb, "Ibn Taymiyyah," *Mahrajān* 1963, p. 653.

the Sunnah (the sayings and deeds of Prophet Muḥammad). He also sought to refute some of the popular ideas advocated by the various Islamic sects—such as the Muʿtazilites (Muʿtazilah), Ash͟ʿarites (As͟hāʿirah), and Murjiʾites (al-Murjiʾah)—whose ideas, he believed, were primarily based on al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyyah, *rational thinking.* Ibn Taymiyyah was convinced that fundamental Islamic concepts must be interpreted from the uṣūl, *roots,* that are found in the al-ʿulūm al-naqliyyah and are traditionally based on the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. These concepts are also based on the understanding and interpretation of the al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ, *the pious ancestors.* The doctrine of Ibn Taymiyyah is a "synthesis of conciliation—the happy mean (wasaṭ)—which would accord to each school its rightful place in a strongly hierarchical whole in conformity with the precepts of the Ḳurʾān and the Sunna."[16] Thus he wrote *Kitab al-Iman* and most of his other books and treatises as a means to explain Islamic principles and as a response to the threats and challenges that faced the Muslim community. In addition he wanted to expound on the concept of Iman and its relationship to Islam, Iḥsan, *perfection (in religion),*[17] and taṣdīq, *assent.* He was especially interested in explaining what constitutes Iman. He also wanted to make his own views clear to both his supporters and opponents and was concerned about how Islam was practiced during his lifetime and about the influence exerted by some of the influential religious scholars. Ibn Taymiyyah believed that some members of the Muslim community were under the influence of various Islamic sects that had changed the practice of Islam from the ways of the Prophet (pbuh), the Companions, their Successors, and the pious ancestors of the first three Islamic centuries. All these issues were discussed, analyzed, and made abundantly clear with supporting evidence and documentation from the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, and writings of the scholars from those first three centuries in which the Ḥanbalī school tradition was emphasized.

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, the discord among the Muslims, originated when the K͟hārijites seceded from the other sects. This was the beginning of dissension among the various Muslim sects—a dispute that included the Muʿtazilites, Murjiʾites, Jahmites (Jahmiyyah), Ashʿarites, S͟hīʿites (S͟hīʿah), and various Sūfī groups.

[16] H. Laoust *EI* 2, vol. 3, p. 953.

[17] The word Iḥsan is better translated as *perfection* [in religion] rather than *beneficence* or *righteousness,* as it usually is. See Izutsu, pp. 58–62.

Of further concern to Ibn Taymiyyah were the political tensions and uncertainties of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. When Ibn Taymiyyah's birthplace, Ḥarrān, was threatened by the Mongols, his family moved to Damascus. He was directly involved in defending the city and its people. Both the theological and political problems were of immediate concern to a man of Ibn Taymiyyah's status. As noted above, in Egypt and Syria Ibn Taymiyyah challenged both the religious scholars of the various schools and sects as well as the ruling authorities. He was convinced that the weakness and division in the Muslim community were the result of a failure to observe Islam as it had been practiced by the Companions and al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ, *the pious ancestors.*

Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah's objective in writing *Kitab al-Iman* was to connect the believer directly with the benefit obtained from the words of Allah and His Messenger. Thus he was interested in restoring true Islam to the people. And although he did not want to write about the controversies among the people of his time, he admitted that he could not avoid doing so. The best way to resolve these disputes, he felt, was through the correct understanding of the words of Allah and His Messenger. Consequently, every issue Ibn Taymiyyah discussed was always supported by quotes from the Qur'ān and the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh).

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND THEMES OF *KITAB AL-IMAN*

A detailed account of all the concepts in *Kitab al-Iman* would constitute a book by itself. Here it is only possible to highlight its most significant issues. The central theme is the concept of Iman. One clear characteristic of the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah is his repetitious style. This is probably due to his desire to make sure that the points under discussion were fully understood. In reading *Kitab al-Iman,* for example, one gets the impression that he did not just sit down and write it, but rather that it is a collection of lectures and lessons once delivered to his students and then organized in the form of a book.

The Concepts of Iman, Islam, and Iḥsan

Ibn Taymiyyah believed that Islam and Iman constitute the Islamic religion as a whole and that all disputes concerning the religion should be resolved primarily on the basis of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh). The

disputes started with the Khārijites (Khawārij)[18] and were later intensified with the emergence of other Islamic sects, such as the Muʿtazilites, Ashʿarites, and Murjiʾites. Also, the theological differences that existed between orthodox Islam (i.e., the four major schools) and the Shīʿites contributed to a growing division among Muslims.

In addition to the concepts of Iman and Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah introduced the concept of Iḥsan, *perfection (in religion).* Of the three concepts he judged Iḥsan to be the highest, followed by Iman and then Islam. In his discussion he did not dwell much on the concept of Iḥsan; the main focus of his book is on the concepts of Iman and Islam. He said that every Muḥsin, *man of Iḥsan,* is a Muʾmin, *believer,* and every believer is a Muslim, but the converse of both statements is not necessarily true. Ibn Taymiyyah's discussion concerning the difference between Iman and Islam is essentially based on the Angel Gabriel's ḥadith and the Qurʾānic verse about al-Aʿrāb, *the desert Arabs.* Allah says: "Al-Aʿrāb say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have not yet believed; but only say: We have submitted [to Islam] . . .'" (49:14). Numerous other Qurʾānic verses and ḥadiths were also utilized by Ibn Taymiyyah in his discussion on Iman and Islam.

Iman Is Both Saying and Work

Ibn Taymiyyah took issue with other Islamic sects on what constitutes Iman. He affirmed that Iman, is both qawl, *saying,* or *utterance*, and ʿamal, *work, or deed.*[19] He devoted almost two entire chapters to this issue as well as references to it throughout the book. Among the adversaries with which he took issue were the Murjiʾite and the Jahmite sects.[20] The Murjiʾites believed that ʿamal, was not

[18] Unlike the other sects, the Khārijites did not have any direct influence on these disputes during the lifetime of Ibn Taymiyyah. However, they did play a very important role in the early development of Islamic theology. See Watt, 1985, pp. 7–13.

[19] The term ʿamal, *work*, and it's plural aʿmāl, *works*, both occur frequently throughout the book and are translated work and works respectively. They also have the sense of actions or deeds.

[20] The discussion presented here is not intended to give a detailed and thorough analysis of the concept of Iman and other related issues. There are several studies that deal with this concept; the most comprehensive is the work by the late Toshiko Izutsu which discusses the various aspects of the theory of the Iman of Ibn Taymiyyah. Izutsu compares and contrasts the different opinions of the Islamic sects on the concept of Iman. His book is entitled *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology: A Semantic Analysis of Iman and Islam.* Yokohama: Yurindo Publishing, 1965.

considered a necessary aspect of Iman. They stated: "Iman is taṣdīq, *assent,* in the heart and a saying of the tongue but does not include works."[21] They further asserted that Iman is mere taṣdīq, *assent,* and ʿilm, *knowledge,* without work. Therefore if someone is judged to be an unbeliever who will abide in Hell for eternity, it is because he lacked knowledge and assent in his heart. According to the Jahmites, a person can commit all sorts of blasphemous acts and still be called a believer as long as he has Iman in his heart. Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān considered such behavior as mere acts of unbelief that did not nullify Iman in one's heart. On this issue Ibn Taymiyyah was in complete disagreement with the Murjiʾites, Jahmites, and any other Islamic sects that agreed with them.

The Karrāmites views of Iman focused on qawl, *saying,* whereas the Jahmites and Murjiʾites emphasized knowledge. Both of these groups, however, did not consider ʿamal, *work,* as an essential part of Iman. Ibn Taymiyyah argued strongly against the view of the Murjiʾites, who affirmed that Iman is mere taṣdīq, *assent.* He said that was one of the gravest errors they ever committed. The concept of Iman is even more comprehensive and universal than most Islamic sects were willing to consider or imagine. It includes work, saying, and intent, followed by the Sunnah.

The Increase and Decrease of Iman

The issue of whether Iman can be increased or diminished was discussed by Ibn Taymiyyah, and, as in his customary method, he cited Qurʾānic verses and a number of ḥadiths that supported his discussion. In this regard the Murjiʾites questioned how this issue applied to ʿamal, *work.* This is an important issue because Ibn Taymiyyah considered work to be an essential constituent of Iman. He judged the Murjiʾites' view of Iman as mere taṣdīq, *assent,* and ʿilm, *knowledge,* without any reference to work, to be one of their gravest errors. Another error, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, is that the Murjiʾites judged someone to be an unbeliever who abides in Hell forever if he lacks assent and knowledge in his heart. The Murjiʾites also believed that Iman, which lies in the heart,

[21] In regard to this sect, W. Madelung states: "The identification of faith with true belief to the exclusion of acts, which later became the essential trait of irdjāʾ, was clearly implied, though not the central theme, in the earliest Murjiʾite's teachings." *EI* 2, vol. 7, pp. 605–7; also referred to in Abu Zahrah, pp. 175–78, and in Izutsu, pp. 159–79.

became complete with the revelation, and that no one's Iman is greater than anyone else's.

Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah, taking a stronger position, challenged the Khārijites' claim that if the Iman of someone diminishes, that person should be charged with unbelief. This contradicts the position of the Orthodox Muslims. In this regard, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "He (Allah) will remove from Hell whoever has an atom's weight of Iman." Another Islamic sect, the Muʿtazilites, were also challenged by Ibn Taymiyyah concerning their position with regard to Iman. They were considered in a manzilah bayna al-manzilatayn, *in-between state* (i.e., they were neither believers nor unbelievers). Ibn Taymiyyah emphatically opposed their view.

This raises the question of tafāḍul, *variation in degrees,* with regard to Iman. In discussing Ibn Taymiyyah's thesis of increasing and decreasing Iman and its varying degrees, Izutsu said: "The pivotal point of this theory is the inclusion of 'work' in the concept of *Iman*. The thesis that *Iman* allows many degrees and individual differences is but a natural consequence of this understanding of *Iman*."[22]

Literal and Figurative Meanings

Ibn Taymiyyah devoted a sizeable chapter to issues of language and linguistics, with the main focus on the dichotomy between the concepts of ḥaqīqah and majāz, *literal and figurative*. These two terms, throughout their history, are almost always treated jointly. In the opinion of Ibn Taymiyyah, this division, which is a terminological iṣṭilāḥ, *convention,* was not alluded to by the Companions of the Prophet, their Successors, or any of the well-attested religious scholars. He further emphasized that the division between ḥaqīqah and majāz was not even mentioned by the early Arab philologists and grammarians. The division between these two terms did not become an issue until after the third century of the Hijrah, when it was adapted and debated by some Islamic sects. Ibn Taymiyyah said that the most prominent among these sects were the Muʿtazilites.

[22] Izutsu, p. 185. In addition to the discussion of increase and decrease of Iman in *Kitab al-Iman*, see Izutsu's analysis where he brings in the different points of view expressed by other scholars, such as Ibn Ḥazm and Taftazānī.

The important issue regarding the dichotomy between ḥaqīqah and majāz was discussed by Wolfhart Heinrichs in an article entitled "On the Genesis of the Ḥaqīqa-Majāz Dichotomy."[23] Heinrichs specifically traced the history of majāz to the early Islamic period. He asserts that this term is not confined to the Qur'ān and the ḥadith but is also found in the poetry and speech of the Arabs. He discusses this term as it was treated by the various religious scholars, notably Abu ʿUbaydah in his book *Majāz al-Qur'ān.*[24]

In addition to chapter eight of *Kitab al-Iman,* which Ibn Taymiyyah devoted to the dichotomy of the terms ḥaqīqah and majāz, he also wrote a treatise on the same theme.[25]

Another linguistic issue discussed by Ibn Taymiyyah was the mabda' al-lughāt, *origin of languages.*[26] He raised the question of how language theories were perceived by different scholars. Abu Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī, al-Ashʿarī[27] and other scholars were of the opinion that language is iṣṭilāḥiyyah, *conventional.* However, al-Ashʿarī later retreated from this position and disagreed with the Muʿtazilites on several fundamental issues, including the origin of language. He held the view that language is tawqifiyyah which is based on learning and experience. The language theory most favored by Orthodox Muslims is the revelationist theory, which is based on the idea that language was originally revealed to man by Allah. Thus Allah inspires human beings with speech just as He does other creatures. Furthermore, as stated in the Qur'ān, Allah taught Adam the names of all entities

[23] See *Studia Islamica* 59, 1984, pp. 111–40. Also, on this important topic, see John Wansbrough's book *Qur'ānic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation.* London: Oxford University Press, 1977 and his earlier article "Majāz al-Qur'ān: Periphrastic Exegesis" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* 33. London, 1970, pp. 247–66. Also see Ella al-Magor, "The Early Meaning of Majāz and the Nature of Abu ʿUbayda's Exegesis," *Studia Islamica,* 1979, pp. 307–26. All these studies emphasize the early history of the term 'majāz.'

[24] *Majāz al-Qur'ān* (2 vols.), Cairo, 1962, was edited by Fu'ād Sezgin.

[25] This treatise is included in his *Majmūʿ Fatāwā Ibn Taymiyyah,* vol 20. Collected and edited by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qāsim with the assistance of his son Muḥammad. Published by Maṭbaʿat al-Maʿārif, Rabat, Morocco, n.d., pp. 400–97.

[26] This issue was discussed by Bernard G. Weiss in "Medieval Discussions of the Origin of Language," *ZDMG* (1974): 33–41.

[27] Al-Ashʿarī, Abu al-Ḥassan ʿAlī Ibn Ismāʿīl (260–324 A.H), was a theologian and founder of the school of orthodox theology that bears his name. He is a descendent of Abu Mūsa al-Ashʿarī. [*EI* 2, p. 694 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 5, p. 69.]

and presented those names to the Angels. Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized that Allah did not teach Adam all the languages that everyone would ever speak. The different languages of the world would, of course, be spoken by Adam's offsprings and they would only pass their own language on to their children.

The Semantic Theory of Absolute and Conditioned

Ibn Taymiyyah, in defining and analyzing the terms associated with key concepts, introduced and applied a unique semantic theory that distinguished between what he called the muṭlaq, *absolute* usage and the muqayyad, *conditioned* usage. An illustration of this approach is the difference between the terms maʿrūf, *good,* and munkar, *evil.* When these two terms are used in a muṭlaq, *absolute,* sense they encompass everything morally good and evil, respectively. However, when they occur in a muqayyad, *conditioned,* sense they indicate a restricted or qualified context.[28] Ibn Taymiyyah stated that to fully understand the shades of meaning of words in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah—especially between such polar opposites as maʿrūf and munkar—it is essential to analyze them according to the dichotomy between absolute and conditioned usage. This theory was also rigorously applied to the analysis of the concept of Iman.

The Concept of Exception

One of the issues debated in Islamic theology is whether or not to use the conditional clause "In shāʾa Allah," *if Allah wills,* after the affirmative clause "anā mu'min," *I am a believer.* Allah says: "Do not say of anything: 'I shall do it tomorrow' except [with the saying] 'if Allah wills' . . ." (18:23–24). The realization of actions and their execution in the future are dependent on Allah's will. This issue came to be known as istithnāʾ, *exception.* The Murjiʾites, Jahmites, and those who agreed with them considered Iman as an entity which a person acknowledged in his heart. Thus, if one said that he uttered the Shahādah, *testimony,* or "I am a believer," he would need to say the exception as it is acknowledged in the heart. Therefore they believed that those who use the

[28] This semantic theory of absolute and conditioned is briefly discussed in Izutsu, pp. 71–74.

exception, with regard to Iman, have raised an element of shakk, *doubt,* about their belief and are thus referred to as the al-shakkākah, *the doubters.*

The pious ancestors, such as Ibn Masʿūd, used to make the exception "if Allah wills" with regard to Iman. Their position was not that they had uncertainty about their Iman but simply used it to affirm the statement "I am a believer," and there was no other connotation beyond that. As Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal emphasized, Iman is both a saying and work. The exception used by the pious ancestors was not directed to the saying but rather to the element of carrying out the obligations since absolute Iman includes the performance of all that Allah commands and the abandonment of all that He prohibits. At the same time, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal disliked the question, "Are you a believer?" because he thought that it was a heresy introduced by the Murjiʿites to defend their position that Iman, particularly absolute Iman, is mere taṣdīq, *assent.* In this case, Aḥmad, who represented the orthodox Muslim position, refrained from using the exception.

One of the issues raised about the exception with regard to Iman is al-muwāfāt, *the state of belief at the time of one's death.*[29] Ibn Taymiyyah explained the position of the Kullābite sect with regard to al-muwāfāt as the state in which a man dies. Every man is either a believer or an unbeliever at the time of his death and nothing of essence prior to this time matters. In other words, if one's Iman is followed by a state of kufr, *unbelief,* and he dies suddenly, he dies as an unbeliever. Ibn Taymiyyah opposed the use of exception in the state of the al-muwāfāt because he believed that the Kullābite sect did not understand the view of the pious ancestors concerning this matter.

EDITIONS OF *KITAB AL-IMAN*

Kitab al-Iman is a valuable and basic source on the topic of faith. It has a wide readership and, as a result, there have been several Arabic editions published. The accuracy of these editions varies from one edition to another, some are abridged and others contain the full text. For the purpose of this translation seven different editions were consulted, most based on what is usually referred to as the Indian edition (1311 A.H.). Two of these were adapted as the main source on which this

[29] See Izutsu, chapter 10, "I Am A Believer, If God Wills," pp. 194–203.

translation is based: the editions published by Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī (1st ed.) and al-Maktab al-Islāmī (2d ed.). The seven editions of *Kitab al-Iman* utilized are listed below by publisher and edition.

Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1st ed., 408 pp., Damascus, 1381 A.H. (Referred to as MI.1.) This edition has a very brief introduction by Zuhayr al-S͟hāwīs͟h and is based on the Indian edition. Numbers for the Qur'ānic verses appear in footnotes. However, the numbering is not always accurate. The ḥadiths that occur in the text are carefully edited by the well-known scholar of ḥadiths Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī. This edition does not contain any chapter titles or subtitles and the divisions are indicated only by the heading faṣl, *chapter*. It contains a table of contents in which detailed subheadings are given along with a brief table of errors at the end of the book. Overall, the footnotes are brief and few in number.

Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 2d ed., 455 pp., Beirut, 1392 A.H. (Referred to as MI.2.) This edition also features a brief introduction by Zuhayr al-S͟hāwīs͟h. The volume contains twenty-three chapters of varying lengths. For instance, chapter 22 is about a hundred pages long. This edition is basically the same as the first, with only a few improvements. For example, numbers for the Qur'ānic verses appear in brackets immediately following the quotation. The table of contents, placed at the end of the text, does not correspond exactly with the titles and subtitles of the first edition. Both of these editions are considered very reliable.

Dār al-Ṭibāʿah al-Muḥammadiyyah at al-Azhar, 1st ed., Cairo, n.d., 404 pp. Edited by Muḥammad K͟halīl Harrās. (Referred to as MKH.) Basically the main text is similar to al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 2d ed. However, the division of paragraphs is different. The volume is clearly printed and has a short introduction by the editor. No numbers are provided for the Qur'ānic verses, but references for the ḥadiths appear in parentheses. The editor provides notes, but for the most part, they are not much help.

Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1st ed., Beirut, 1983, 398 pp.(Referred to as DKI.) This edition contains a one-page introduction and a brief biography of Ibn Taymiyyah with a list of sixteen of his well-known works. The Qur'ānic verses are enclosed in parentheses and their verse numbers are placed in the footnotes. The references for the ḥadiths are in small double parentheses. Footnotes and subtitles are limited and are not based on the style of the above editions. There is

no index, but the volume does contain a table of contents that includes subheadings.

Dār Iḥyā᾽ al-ʿUlūm, 1st ed., Beirut, 1984, 350 pp. Edited by Shaykh Ḥusayn Yūsuf al-Ghazāl. (Referred to as GHA.) Shaykh Ghazāl has heavily edited and summarized some of the chapters. For instance, in the original edition chapter 8 is about thirty pages, but in this edition it is summarized into a little over three. In all, the original text has been reduced by about seventy pages. Long notes have been inserted into the text in brackets. In a lengthy introduction, Shaykh Ghazāl attributes his summarization and extensive abridgement to a desire to make the language more accessible for the reader. The convenient and attractive layout—including subheadings, footnotes, and numbering of Qur᾽ānic verses—will appeal to the reader.

Dār al-Kitab al-ʿArabī, 1st ed., Beirut, 1993, 459 pp. Edited by Muḥammad al-Zabīdī. (Referred to as MZ.) This edition, was received after the first draft of this translation was completed, is by far the best and was used extensively in the several revisions and refinements of the work. In the introduction, the editor included a biography of Ibn Taymiyyah based on some of the basic original sources. One attractive feature, not included in the other editions, is the volume's ten indices, including an index of the occasional verses of poetry that occur in the text. The last chapter of the book contains a minor typographical error. A few lines that should have appeared on page 378 were mistakenly switched with lines on page 376. The editor also added subheadings. Compared to the twenty-three chapters of MI.2, this edition contains only nineteen. The editor has taken the liberty of combining some of the short chapters.

Kitab al-Iman is included as volume 7 in *Majmūʿ Fatāwā Ibn Taymiyyah,* collected and edited by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qāsim with the assistance of his son Muḥammad. Published by Maṭba'at al-Maʿārif, Rabat, Morocco. n.d., 460 pp. As indicated by the editors in the introduction, volume 7 includes only a running text with no footnotes, index, or references for Qur᾽ānic verses. The editors refer to it as *Kitab al-Iman al-Kabīr,* The Major Kitab al-Iman. This edition includes additional material that the editors have called *Kitab al-Iman al-Awsaṭ,* The Middle Book of Faith (pp. 461–686). Some of the topics discussed in this section relate to the major theme of Iman and, of course, are not included in this translation.

Chapter One

The Difference Between Iman, Islam, and Iḥsan

In the Name of Allah
the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful

Praise be to Allah. We seek help and forgiveness from Him. We take refuge in Him from the evils of our souls and from our bad deeds. One whom Allah guides to the right path will never go astray and he who goes astray will never find the right way. We testify that there is no god but Allah, and He has no associate; and we testify that Muḥammad (pbuh) and his family, is His servant and Messenger.[1]

Know that Iman, *belief,* and Islam combine to form religion as a whole.[2] However, there has been much discussion, dispute, and confusion among people about the essence of Iman and about Islam, and many volumes have been written in regard to this. The dispute concerning this matter emanates from the time when the Khārijites seceded from other sects.

We explain what may be applicable from the words of Allah, the Exalted, along with the words of the Prophet (pbuh), so that the believer will arrive at the essence

[1] Ibn Taymiyyah, in his book *Kitab al-Iman,* did not use titles for the chapters, rather he used only the word faṣl, *chapter.* The different editors of the Arabic copies of this book used various methods for chapter headings and subheadings. The approach adopted in this translation is actually a combination of these methods together with some modifications. We have basically used the chapter headings and subheadings from *Kitab al-Iman* MZ.

[2] Throughout the translation the term Iman is understood to mean faith in certain general contexts, and belief in more specific contexts. However, the precise meaning of Iman, whether translated as faith or belief, is determined in context. In the Qur'ān there is more tendency for the word to be understood as faith when it is used in a muṭlaq, *absolute,* sense. This level of Iman is attained when a person fulfills all the obligations that Allah commands. When the word is used in a muqayyad, *conditioned,* sense it connotes a specific type of Iman.

of the words of Allah and His Messenger. Indeed, this is the purpose. We do not want to mention the disputes of the people at the beginning. Rather we address that topic within the explanation of the benefits obtained from the words of Allah and His Messenger. The best way to resolve the sources of the disputes is by referring them to Allah and His Messenger, both in this world and in the Hereafter.

We state that the Prophet (pbuh) differentiated among the concepts of Islam, Iman, and Iḥsan, *perfection (in religion),* in the ḥadith of the Angel Gabriel. The Prophet said: "Islam means that you must testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, you must perform ṣalāh, *prayers,* you must give zakah,[3] you must fast during the month of Ramaḍān, and you must make pilgrimage to the Sacred House, if you can afford it." He [the Prophet] also said: "Iman is affirming your belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Day of Judgment, and believing in qadar, *predestination,* both in its good and its evil." Indeed the difference between Islam and Iman, which is mentioned in the ḥadith of ʿUmar,[4] is recorded only by Muslim.[5]

3 The word zakah is usually translated as *charity, poor due, tithe, alms giving,* and so on, but in Arabic it suggests both growth and purification.

4 The translators of this book find it useful to list the ḥadith of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb since the author based his argument on it. ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the Blessings of Allah be on him, said: "Once we were sitting with the Prophet (pbuh) when there came upon us a man with snow-white clothes and jet-black hair. There were no signs of fatigue from traveling, yet he was a complete stranger to all of us. Then he sat before the Prophet with his own knees parallel to his knees and his hands on the thighs of the Prophet." Then he said: "Oh Muḥammad, tell me about Islam." The Prophet said: "It is to testify that there is no god but Allah, to observe regular prayers, to give zakah, to fast the month of Ramaḍān, and to perform Pilgrimage to the Sacred House, if you can afford it." Then the stranger said: "You have spoken the truth." We wondered why he asked him and then told him what he had said was true. Then again he asked: "Tell me about Iman." The Prophet answered: "It is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Day of Judgement and to believe in predestination, both, in its good and its evil." The stranger said: "You have spoken the truth." Then he asked: "Tell me about Iḥsan." The Prophet replied: "It is to worship Allah as if you were seeing Him, though you do not see Him, He sees you." Again he asked: "Tell me about the Day of Judgement." The Prophet answered that he knew no more about it than his questioner. But when he asked him about its signs, the Prophet answered: "It is when a slave girl gives birth to her own mistress and when you see the barefooted and tattered, needy shepherds of goats vying with each other to erect high buildings." When the stranger departed, the Prophet (pbuh) was silent for a long while, and then said: "Oh ʿUmar, do you recognize the questioner?" I [ʿUmar] replied: "Allah and His Messenger know best." Then the Prophet said: "It is Gabriel: He has come to teach you your religion." (Narrated by Muslim).

5 Muslim, Abu al-Ḥusayn (202–261 A.H.), was one of the most well-known collectors of ḥadith. His collection, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* is probably the most famous book of ḥadith after *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.*[*EI* 2, vol. 7, pp. 691–92].

In the ḥadith of Abu Hurayrah,[6] reported by both al-Bukhārī[7] and Muslim, it is said that the Angel Gabriel came to him [the Prophet] in the image of an Arab person from the desert and asked him about Islam, Iman, and Iḥsan. But in the ḥadith of ʿUmar he came in the image of an Arab from the desert.

Also, he [the Prophet] explained the meaning of Islam in the famous ḥadith of Ibn ʿUmar. He said: "Islam is based on five pillars: testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger, performing prayers, giving zakah, making pilgrimage to the Sacred House, and fasting during Ramaḍān."

The Three Ranks of Religion: Islam, Iman, and Iḥsan

Gabriel's ḥadith indicates that Islam, built on five pillars, is the true Islam. In other words, Islam is considered the structure upon which the five pillars are based. The Prophet (pbuh) indicated that religion has three darajāt, *ranks*, of which the highest is Iḥsan, the middle is Iman, followed then by Islam. Thus, every Muḥsin, *man of Iḥsan,* is a Muʾmin, *believer,* and every believer is a Muslim. However, not every believer is a Muḥsin nor is every Muslim a believer, as will be indicated in shāʾa Allah, *if Allah wills,* later in the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh). As in the ḥadith, narrated by Ḥammād Ibn Zayd[8] on the authority of Ayyūb[9] on the authority of Abu Qilābah[10] on the authority of a man from Syria on the authority of his father, the Prophet (pbuh) said to him: "Embrace Islam and you will be in peace." The man then asked: "What is Islam?" The Prophet replied:

[6] Abu Hurayrah, al-Dawsī al-Yamānī (?–59 A.H.), was a Companion of the Prophet and one of the most famous narrators of ḥadith. He narrated over 3,500 ḥadiths, many of which appear in both the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of Bukharī and Muslim. [*EI* 2, p. 129.]

[7] Al-Bukhārī, Abu ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad Ibn Ismāʿīl (194–256 A.H.), was the most famous collector of ḥadith and his book *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, which is published in nine volumes, is the most widely used book on ḥadith. [*EI* 1, vol. 1, pp. 1296–97.]

[8] Ḥammād, Abu Ismāʿīl Ibn Zayd Ibn Dirham al-Azdī (98-179 A.H.), was one of the trustworthy compilers of ḥadith who lived in Baṣrah. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 29 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 2, p. 301.]

[9] Ayyūb, Abu Bakr al-Sakhtiyānī (66–131 A.H.), was a collector of ḥadith, a jurist, and a reciter of the Qurʾān. [Al-Ziriklī, p. 382 and *Studies in Early Ḥadith Literature by* M. M. Azami. Beirut, 1968, p. 81.]

[10] Abu Qilābah, ʿAbd Allah Ibn Zayd Ibn ʿAmr al-Baṣrī (?–104 A.H), was a trustworthy man of ḥadith and law. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 29.]

"The submission of your heart to Allah and the protection of Muslims from your tongue and hand." The inquirer asked: "Which Islam is the best?" He [the Prophet] replied: "Iman." The inquirer asked: "Which Iman is the best?" The Prophet answered: "To affirm your belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and in life after death." The inquirer asked: "What of Iman is best?" The Prophet answered: "hijrah, *forsaking*." The inquirer asked: "What is hijrah?" The Prophet replied: "Forsaking evil." The inquirer asked: "Which hijrah is the best?" The Prophet replied: "jihād, *struggle to attain the best*." The inquirer asked: "What is jihād?" The Prophet answered: "To fight and battle against the unbelievers wherever you find them and not to be unfaithful or cowardly." Then the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: " Of all deeds, two deeds are the best, or deeds of similar value." He mentioned this three times. The two deeds that are fully rewarded are performing ḥajj, *pilgrimage,* or ʿumrah, *minor pilgrimage.* It was narrated by Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal][11] and Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī.[12] That is why the Prophet mentions the four ranks in his saying: "A Muslim is one who does not harm other Muslims with his tongue and his hand. A believer is one people trust with their lives and property. A muhājir is one who abandons evil deeds. And a mujāhid is one who strives in the Cause of Allah." This is from the Prophet (pbuh) on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr[13] on the authority of Fuḍālah Ibn ʿUbayd[14] and others with a sound chain of transmission. It is also mentioned in the Sunan, *the books of ḥadiths,* and a portion of it is narrated in the two *Ṣiḥīḥs* [of Bukhārī and Muslim].

[11] Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Abu ʿAbd Allah (164–241 A.H.), was a celebrated theologian, a jurist, and a traditionalist. He was the founder of the Ḥanbalī School of law. [*EI* 2, vol. 1, p. 192.] He is cited frequently in *Kitab al-Iman* and his name may appear either as Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad only, and sometimes Abu ʿAbd Allah.

[12] Al-Marwazī, ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (?–294 A.H.), was a preferred disciple of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. He played an important role in transmitting the ḥadiths that were collected by Ibn Ḥanbal. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 30.]

[13] ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr (Ibn al-ʿĀṣ) (?–63 A.H.) was a Companion of the Prophet and one of the first compilers of ḥadith. His book is entitled *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Ṣādiqah.* Some people objected to his collecting and writing ḥadith. He requested the Prophet's permission to do so, and the Prophet granted it to him. [M. M. Azami, p. 43.]

[14] Fuḍālah Ibn ʿUbayd al-Anṣārī (?–53 A.H.) was one of the Companions of the Prophet, participated in several of the expeditions, and was appointed Judge of Damascus during the Caliphate of Muʿāwiyyah. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 30.]

It is also authentically narrated from the Prophet, through different chains of transmission, that he said: "A Muslim is one who does not harm other Muslims with his tongue and his hand and a believer is one in whom people entrust their lives and property." It is well known that whoever is trusted with lives and properties the Muslims are surely safe from the harm of his tongue and hand—that is, had one not saved the Muslims from the harm of his tongue and hand, they would not have trusted him. Also, this is mentioned in the ḥadith narrated on the authority of ʿUbayd Ibn ʿUmayr[15] through ʿAmr Ibn ʿAbsah.[16]

In the ḥadith of ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿUbayd Ibn ʿUmayr[17] on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather, the Prophet (pbuh) was asked: "What is Islam?" The Prophet replied: "Providing food and saying gracious words." The inquirer asked: "What is Iman?" The Prophet replied: "Tolerance and patience." The inquirer asked: "Who among the Muslims is the best?" Upon this the Prophet replied: "The one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe." The inquirer asked: "Who among the believers possesses superior Iman?" The Prophet answered: "The one with the best morals." The inquirer asked: "Which hijrah is the best?" The Prophet replied: "Forsaking what Allah prohibits." The inquirer asked: "Which prayer is best?" The Prophet answered: "Ṭūl al-qunūt, *a long silent prayer in which one is completely devoted to Allah.*" The inquirer asked: "Which ṣadaqah, *alms,* are best?" Upon this the Prophet said: "Jahdu muqill, *when a man who possesses little property can afford to give in payment the poor rate as required by law.*" The inquirer asked: "Which jihād is best?" The Prophet replied: "To strive in the Cause of Allah with your property and life until your horse is wounded and your blood is spilled." The inquirer asked: "Which of al-sāʿāt, *(the hours) the time,* are best?" The Prophet answered: "The last part of the night."

It is well known that the various marātib, *ranks,* are arranged one above the other. Thus, every muhājir, *forsaker,* is a believer and so is a mujāhid, *striver for the sake of Allah.* For the Prophet said concerning Iman: "It is tolerance and

[15] ʿUbayd Ibn ʿUmayr (?–74 A.H.) was born during the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh) and was considered one of the trustworthy Successors. He was interested in ḥadith and tafsīr, *Qurʾānic interpretations.* [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 31.]

[16] ʿAmr Ibn ʿAbsah (?–60 A.H.) was one of the Companions of the Prophet and one of the leaders in the Yarmūk battle. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 31.]

[17] ʿAbd Allah ʿUbayd Ibn ʿUmayr (?–113 A.H.) was a man of ḥadith and transmitted ḥadith from Ibn ʿAbbās and ʿĀʾishah. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 31.]

patience," and concerning Islam: "It is providing food and saying gracious words." Indeed, Iman is considered a prerequisite of Islam but not the reverse. Accordingly, a believer, as opposed to a Muslim, is patient and tolerant. Sometimes a Muslim may pretend to behave like a believer, but his actual manner is not tolerant and patient. The Prophet also said: "The best of Muslims is one from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe." He added: "The best of believers is the one with the best morals." It is well known that the latter [Islam] implies the former [Iman], for if one has good morals, then other Muslims are safe from his hand and tongue.

EXPLICIT DEEDS ARE PART OF IMAN

Al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī[18] was asked: "What are good morals?" He replied: "Badhlul-nadā, *generosity,* kafful-adhā, *refraining from doing harm,* and ṭalāqatul-wajh, *cheerfulness.*" Thus, he considers refraining from doing harm as a part of good morals. The following are some of the aḥādīth ṣaḥīḥah, *sound sayings,* of the Prophet in which he considered al-aʿmāl al-ẓāhirah, *explicit deeds or behaviors,* as a manifestation of Iman. He said, for example: "Iman has over seventy branches, the highest of which is saying: 'There is no god but Allah,' and the lowest is the act of removing what is perilous from the road." And the Prophet said to a delegation of the people of ʿAbd al-Qays: "I command you to have Iman only in Allah. Do you really know what Iman only in Allah is? It is testifying that there is no god but Allah, that He is alone and has no partner, performing prayers, giving zakah, and paying one-fifth of the spoils you acquire."

It is well known that nothing has been reported to signify that deeds, tolerance, and patience can constitute Iman in Allah unless one has a believing heart. For it has been narrated, by many authorities, that having a believing heart is a necessity for having Iman in Allah. In the *Musnad* of Anas [Ibn Mālik][19] narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Islam is explicit and Iman is implicit in the heart." The Prophet also said: "There is a muḍghah, *small piece,* in the human body. If it is

[18] Al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī (21–110 A.H.), was a pious man of learning who was born in Madīnah and later settled in Baṣrah. He was one of the Successors and a brave and religious scholar. [*EI* 2, vol. 3, p. 247 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 2, p. 242.]

[19] Anas Ibn Mālik, Abu Ḥamzah(?–93 A.H.), was one of the Companions of the Prophet and a compiler of ḥadith. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 1, p. 365 and *EI* 2, vol. 1, p. 282.]

pure, the whole body becomes pure. However, if it is corrupt, the whole body becomes corrupt. Indeed, it [the muḍghah] is the heart." Thus, he whose heart is pure certainly has a pure body, but not the reverse.

Sufyān Ibn ʿUyaynah[20] said: "Scholars used to write to each other the following words of advice: 'He who purifies his inner thoughts, may Allah purify his outer thoughts and actions. And he who purifies the relationship between himself and Allah, Allah may purify the relationship between him and other people; and he who works for the Hereafter, may Allah reward him in his worldly affairs.'" This ḥadith was narrated by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā[21] in the book of *al-Ikhlāṣ*.

Therefore it is well known that, if the heart is purified by Iman, then the body is purified by Islam, which is part of Iman. This is indicated in Gabriel's ḥadith where the Prophet said [to his Companions]: "This is Gabriel, who has come to instruct you in matters of your religion." He [the Prophet] regarded religion as Islam, Iman, and Iḥsan. Thus, it is obvious that our religion is a combination of the these three concepts. But they are arranged into three ranks: Muslim, Muʾmin, and Muḥsin. As Allah, the Exalted, says: "Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our servants as We have chosen. But there are among them some who wrong their own souls, some who follow a middle course, and some who are, by Allah's permission, foremost in good deeds . . ." (35:32).[22] He who follows a muqtaṣid, *middle course,* and he who is foremost in good deeds, but not he who wrongs his own soul, will enter Paradise without punishment. Hence, whoever applies the outward obligation of Islam with taṣdīq, *assent,* of the heart but fails to perform the obligation of al-Iman al-bāṭin, *inward belief,* will be subject to future punishment, as will be illustrated later, in shāʾa Allah.

Iḥsan is a more inclusive concept than Iman, but it also has a more specific sense than Iman. Iman, in turn, is a more inclusive concept than Islam. Thus, Iḥsan includes Iman, which in turn, includes Islam. Consequently, al-muḥsinūn, *the*

[20] Sufyān Ibn ʿUyaynah, Abu Muḥammad (107–198 A.H.), was a scholar of ḥadith, a jurist, and a reciter of Qurʾān. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 159 and *al-Fihrist,* vol. 1, p. 547.]

[21] Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Abu Bakr ʿAbd Allah Ibn Muḥammad (208–281 A.H.), was an ascetic, a scholar, and one of the compilers of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, pp. 32–33; al-Ziriklī, vol. 4, p. 260; and *al-Fihrist,* vol. 2, p. 982.]

[22] Ibn Taymiyyah often selects only a certain portion of a Qurʾānic verse to document the point under discussion. The quoted portion could be taken from the beginning, middle, or end of the verse. In such cases the translators have inserted three dots to signify missing parts.

people of Iḥsan, are more distinguished than al-mu'minūn, *the believers,* and the believers are more distinguished than the Muslims. The same analogy can be applied to the concepts of Message and Prophethood. Prophethood is encompassed in the Message, when the term Prophethood is used in a generalized sense. On the other hand, this term has more restrictive sense when it is used by itself. Therefore every messenger is a prophet, but not the reverse. Prophets are more generalized than messengers. Prophethood is part of the Message because the Message includes Prophethood plus other matters, but not the reverse.

Indeed, the Prophet (pbuh) interpreted Islam and Iman through his answers to the questions put to him. For example, when he was asked: "What is ghībah, *backbiting*?" He replied: "Mentioning something about your brother in his absence that he abhors." The Prophet also said in another ḥadith: "Arrogance is disdaining the truth and despising people." Disdaining the truth means denying it, and despising people means looking at them with disrespect and contempt. In shā'a Allah, it will be reported later why the Prophet produces diverse answers to suit different situations and why all of them are ḥaqq, *true.*

However, what is meant by the Prophet's saying: "Islam is built on five [pillars]," is similar to [the meaning of] his saying: "Islam is the five [pillars]," as indicated in Gabriel's ḥadith. Namely, if a matter is composed of parts, its collective structure is naturally built on those parts and composed of them. That is, Islam is built on, as well as composed of, these pillars. We will explain later, in shā'a Allah, that these five [pillars] form the essence of Islam and Islam is built on them. It will also be explained why, among the duties, these pillars are especially designated.

In his ḥadith to the delegation from the people of ʿAbd al-Qays, he [the Prophet] interpreted Iman in a way similar to his interpretation of Islam (as illustrated above), with only one exception. Pilgrimage was not mentioned in his interpretation of Iman, even though it is generally agreed that the pilgrimage is part of belief. He said: "I command you to have belief only in Allah. Do you really know what belief only in Allah is?" They replied: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: "Testifying that there is no god but Allah and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing prayers, giving zakah, fasting during Ramaḍān, and paying one-fifth of the spoils that you acquire."

In some other versions of this ḥadith it was narrated: "Belief in Allah and testifying that there is no god but Allah." This differs from the first version of the ḥadith and is not as well known. In Abu Saʿīd's [al-Khudrī][23] version he said: "I command you to do four things and I command you not to do four things. Worship Allah alone and do not associate anything with him." In the famous ḥadith of the branches of Iman, he explained Iman as follows: "Iman consists of more than sixty or seventy branches, the best of which is saying, Lā ilāha illā Allah, *there is no god but Allah,* and the least of which is the removing harm from the road, and ḥayāʾ, *modesty,* is one branch of Iman."

The Prophet said: "Modesty is a branch of Iman." This was affirmed by many narrators, such as [ʿAbd Allah] Ibn ʿUmar,[24] Ibn Maʿsūd,[25] and ʿImrān Ibn Ḥuṣayn. He [the Prophet] also said: "None of you is a believer until I am dearer to him than his child, his parents, and all people." He said: "None among you truly believes until one loves for his brother that which one loves for himself." He also said: "I swear by Allah that one never has belief, I swear by Allah that one never has belief, I swear by Allah that one never has belief." The Prophet repeated it three times. He was asked: "Oh, Prophet! Who is that?" The Prophet replied: "He whose neighbor is not secure from his harmful conduct." The Prophet also said: "If anyone among you should see something wrong, he should correct it with his hand; and if he is not able to, then with this tongue; if he is not able to, then with his heart. And that is the weakest of Iman." And the Prophet said: "Never before has a Prophet been sent by Allah to his ummah, *community,* who among his people had no disciples and companions who followed his ways and obeyed his commands. Then after them come their successors, who say one thing but do another, and practiced not what they were commanded to do. Thus, he who strove against them with his hand is considered a believer; and he who strove against them with his tongue is considered a believer; and he who strove against them

[23] Abu Saʿīd al-Khudrī, Saʿd Ibn Mālik (?–74 A.H.), was considered one of the main narrators of ḥadith from the Prophet. He felt that ḥadiths should not be written down and forbid his students to do so. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 150 and M. M. Azami, p. 39.]

[24] ʿAbd Allah Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (?–73 A.H.) was the son of the second Caliph, an excellent transmitter of ḥadith and was considered to be a model of a pious person. [*EI* 2, vol. 1, pp. 53–54 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 4, p. 246.]

[25] ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd (?–32 A.H.) was a famous Companion of the Prophet and a reciter of Qurʾān. [*EI* 2, vol. 3, pp. 873–75.]

with his heart, he is also considered a believer. Beyond that there is no belief even to the size of a ḥabbat khardal, *mustard seed*" (narrated by Muslim only).

Muslim also narrated that the Prophet said: "By Him in whose hand is my soul, you will never enter Paradise until you believe and you will never believe until you love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do it, will foster love among you? Practice frequently saying among you, al-salāmu ʿalaykum, *peace be upon you.*" He [the Prophet] said in the ḥadith whose narration is agreed upon and narrated by Abu Hurayrah. Al-Bukhārī reported the ḥadith of Ibn ʿAbbās[26] that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits it; a drunkard who drinks wine is not a believer as long as he drinks it; no thief who steals is a believer as long as he commits theft; and no plunderer who plunders al-nuhbah, *the valuable thing, that which attracts the attention of people,* is a believer as long as he commits this act."

IMAN AND ISLAM AS CITED IN THE QUR'ĀN

The word Iman is cited in the Qur'ān by itself and not in conjunction with the word Islam nor with the phrase 'righteous work' or other such words or phrases. Sometimes the word Iman is cited as being linked to the word Islam as indicated in Gabriel's ḥadith: "What is Islam and what is Iman?" and in Allah's saying: " Indeed Muslim men and women, and believing men and women . . ." (33:35) and He says: "Al-Aʿrāb, *the desert Arabs,* say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith'; but you only say: 'We have submitted our wills to Allah . . .'" (49:14); Allah also says: "So We brought out from therein the believers who were there. But We found only one house with Muslims in it" (51:35–36). The word Iman was also mentioned in conjunction with the phrase "righteous works," as indicated in the many verses of the Qur'ān. For example, Allah, the Exalted, says: "Indeed, those who have belief and do righteous works . . ." (2:277).

The word Iman may also be linked to those endowed with knowledge. Allah says: "But those endowed with knowledge and belief will say . . ." (30:56). Allah also

[26] Ibn ʿAbbās, Abu al-ʿAbbas ʿAbd Allah (?–68 A.H.), was considered one of the greatest scholars of the first Islamic generation. He was also regarded as the father of Qur'ānic exegesis. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 4, p. 228 and *EI* 1, vol. 1, p. 40.]

says: ". . . Allah will raise up, to suitable ranks and degrees, those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge . . ." (58:11). Whenever He mentions those who believe in Him, those who are endowed with knowledge are included, for they are the best of believers. Allah says: ". . . And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in it [the Book]; the whole of it is from our Lord . . .'" (3:7). Allah also says: ". . . Those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and the believers, believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you . . ." (4:162).

The word al-mu'minūn, *believers,* is also mentioned in the Qur'ān in conjunction with those who follow the Jewish, Christian, and Sabian [religions]. Allah says: "Indeed! Those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians,[27] whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does righteous work, shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (2:62).[28] Thus [Allah differentiates], in the first part of the verse, between the believers and the other three groups. However, in the second part of the verse, "whosoever believes in Allah," the word believe is generalized to speak of those who believe in the Qur'ān, who follow the Jewish scriptures, the Christians, and the Sabians. This generalization is also cited in Allah's saying: "Indeed those who believe and do righteous works are the best of creatures" (98:7). This issue will be explained fully later, in shā'a Allah.

The intended difference here is a matter of generalization and particularization of the external and internal aspects of Iman. However, the generalization regarding the *milals,* religious communities (as cited in 2:62)[29] is a different issue. Whenever Allah mentions Iman jointly with Islam, He regards the latter as the

[27] The name Sabians occurs in three different verses in the Qur'ān–2:62, 5:69 and 22:17. It is a religious community whose several thousand probable descendants live in Southern Iraq on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. They dress in white and believe in frequent immersion in water and are often called baptisers. Their religious book is *Ginza* and is written in the Aramaic language. There was another group also referred to by the name Sabians of Ḥarrān, a city today belongs to Turkey. They were star worshipers and famous astrologers and had hellenistic tendencies. *EI:* Vol.8, 675-79 and *Fihrist:* Vol.2, 745-72.

[28] The text of *Kitab al-Iman* does not quote the first part of this verse, "shall have their reward with their Lord." However, the discussion that follows makes it necessary to quote the entire verse. Also, in all the recensions of *Kitab al-Iman* consulted, this verse is cited as Sūrat al-Mā'idah, verse number 69. The correct reference is Sūrat al-Baqarah, verse 62, as cited above.

[29] The Jewish, Christian, and Sabian religions.

external works (i.e., testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger, performing prayers, giving zakah, fasting during Ramaḍān, and performing the pilgrimage). However, He regards Iman as that which is at the heart of belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and in the Day of Judgment. This difference is affirmed in the ḥadith narrated by Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] on the authority of Anas from the Prophet (pbuh), who said: "Islam is explicit and Iman is in the heart."

Thus whenever the word Iman is cited alone it implies both Islam and righteous works, as is mentioned in the ḥadith of the branches of Iman which says: "Iman consists of more than seventy branches, the highest of which is saying, Lā ilāha illā Allah, *there is no god but Allah,* and the least of which is the removing of harm from the road." This applies to all sayings of the Prophet in which all righteous works are mentioned as part of Iman.

If Iman is negated by abandoning [righteous works], then they are considered as obligations for Iman. However, if the virtue of someone whose righteousness is mentioned, provided that his belief is not negated, then these [righteous works] are considered to be desirable for Iman. For Allah and His Messenger do not negate an obligation they command unless one fails to perform part of that obligation. For example, the Prophet said: "No prayer is complete without reciting umm al-Qur'ān, *the opening chapter,* and no true belief can be ascribed to one who has no loyalty, and no religion is complete for the one who does not abide by his commitment."

However, if one's deed is deemed more desirable in worship than another deed, the worship will not be negated if the desirable deed is lacking. If this is true, then it would be possible to negate from all of the faithful the title of Iman, prayer, charity, and pilgrimage because there are works that are better than others and no one can do righteous works in the exact same way the Prophet (pbuh) did them, even righteous persons like Abu Bakr and ʿUmar. So, if we were to negate them [righteous works] from these individuals because they cannot perfect them, then we can negate them from all Muslims throughout history. And this conclusion cannot be reached by a wise person.

It follows that it is right to say that perfection of belief is negated if one fails to perform part of an obligation for the neglect of which he is to be blamed or

punished. But, this is not the case if he fails to perform a desirable work. Supporting the Prophet's command to an Arab who did not perform prayer in the right manner, the Prophet said: "Go back and perform [your prayer] as it should be performed for it is not complete." He also commanded the man who prayed alone, behind the prayer line, to pray again by saying: "No prayer is accepted from someone who prays alone behind the line." Indeed, the Prophet said that because both men neglected an obligatory act. Further support comes from the following saying of Allah: "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their lives in the Cause of Allah; such are the sincere ones" (49:15). This saying indicates that striving [in the Cause of Allah] is an obligation, and abandoning doubt is an obligation. It is clear from the saying that although jihād, *striving in the cause of Allah,* is considered an obligation to be performed by some believers, all of them are commanded to believe in its being an obligatory act and to have true intention to strive whenever it is due. For the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever dies before he invades, in the cause of Allah, or intends to invade will die as a hypocrite" (recorded by Muslim). This means that he who does not have an intention to strive in Allah's Cause will have a certain degree of hypocrisy. It is inevitable that a believer must practice at least one aspect of jihād.

Allah says: "The believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His Verses rehearsed, find their belief strengthened, and put all of their trust in their Lord; who establish regular prayers, and spend freely of the gifts We have given them for sustenance; such in truth are the believers" (8:2–4). All the acts mentioned above are obligatory. That is, putting trust in Allah is a great obligation, as is sincerity to Allah and love of Him and His Messenger. In fact, His command to "put trust in Him" is stressed even more than that of performing the rite of ablution and of taking a bath when in the state of uncleanliness. In contrast, putting trust in anyone but Allah is prohibited. For Allah says: ". . . Then worship Him, and put your trust in Him . . ." (11:123). Allah also says: "Allah! there is no god but Him. In Allah, therefore let the believers put their trust" (64:13). He also says: "If Allah helps you, none can overcome you; if He forsakes you, who is there, after that, that can help you? In Allah, then, let believers put their trust" (3:160). Allah also says: "Moses said: 'Oh, my people! If you do really believe in Allah, then in Him put your trust if you are Muslims'" (10:84).

Allah says: "For, believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His Verses rehearsed, find their belief strengthened . . ." (8:2). It is said that the presence of some intentions and works in one's heart is a permanent necessity for having belief in Allah. That is, a believer will continue performing these [works] without deliberately striving to do so. However, the absence of these intentions and works indicates that true Iman has not yet been achieved by one's heart. This is illustrated in the following saying of Allah: "You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons, their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has written belief in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself..." (58:22). This saying indicates that you never find a believer who loves those who oppose Allah and His Messenger. For Iman itself precludes love for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger in the same way that opponents stand against one another. Thus, if Iman is in the heart, its opponent, namely, loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, is negated. Likewise, if one loves those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, his loving signals that his heart lacks true belief.

Similar is His saying in the following verse: "You see many of them turning in friendship to the unbelievers. Evil indeed are the works which their souls have sent forward before them, with the result that Allah's wrath is on them, and in torment will they abide. If only they had believed in Allah and the Prophet and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them for friends and protectors, but most of them are wrong-doers" (5:80–81). In these verses, there is a conditional sentence which requires that when a condition is present, then a conditional clause will be introduced by the Arabic particle ' law', which means if when combined with the conditional clause, requires the negation of the conditional sentence. For Allah says: "If only they had believed in Allah and the Prophet and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them for friends and protectors . . ." (5:81). This indicates that the aforementioned Iman, *belief,* precludes taking unbelievers for friends and protectors. It also indicates that belief cannot be found together with taking unbelievers for friends and protectors in one's heart. Moreover, it indicates that the heart of whoever takes unbelievers for friends and protectors is devoid of true belief in Allah, His Prophet, and in what has been revealed to him.

Likewise Allah says: " . . . Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he among you who turns to them for friendship is one of them . . ." (5:51). Indeed, Allah means in these verses that he who takes them [Jews and Christians] as friends is not a believer. He also affirms that he who is a friend of one of them is one of them. For indeed in the Qur'ān the verses are in harmony with and support of one another. Allah says: "Allah has revealed the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book consistent with itself, yet repeating its teaching in various aspects: The skins of those who fear their Lord tremble with it . . ." (39:23). He [Allah] also says: "Indeed the believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and when they are with him on a matter that requires a collective action, they will not depart until they ask for his permission . . ." (24:62). This is an indication that departure without seeking the Prophet's permission is not allowed. One should not leave until seeking permission, for indeed, one who departs from the Prophet's presence without seeking permission abandons some of what is obligated upon him of Iman. Therefore, to do so would negate Iman. That is because the particle innamā, *verily,* affirms the obligation and negates the rest.

Some of the uṣuliyyūn, *religious authorities,* say that the particle inna, *indeed* or *verily,* is used [grammatically] for affirmation and the particle mā, *not,* is used for negation. When both of these particles are used jointly, they indicate both negation and affirmation. However, this is not so with the Arab grammarians. Those who know this matter well know that the particle mā is called mā al-kāffah, and that it bars the particle inna and its sisters from governing. Thus inna specializes in governing nominal clauses, but when it conjoins with mā, its grammatical function is nullified. Consequently, inna, along with mā, can now precede both nominal and verbal clauses simultaneously. As a result, both the function and meaning of inna have changed by suffixing mā to it. The same [grammatical] rule applies to other similar particles such as ka'annamā, *as if.*

Likewise Allah says: "They say: 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey.' But even after that, some of them turn away. They are not really believers. When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that He may judge between them, some decline to come. But if the right is on their side, they come to Him with all submission. Is it that there is an affliction in their hearts? Or do they doubt, or are they in fear, that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them? No, it is they themselves who do wrong. The answer of

the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that He may judge between them, is no other than this, they say: 'We hear and we obey: It is such as these that will be successful.'" (24:47–51).

It is true to say that a true believer is he who performs the obligations and abandons forbidden deeds. For Allah says: "Truly those are the believers . . ." (8:4). And He does not mention more than five requirements for belief. In another verse, Allah says: "The true believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but strive with their belongings and their lives in the Cause of Allah: Such are the sincere ones" (49:15). Allah also says: ". . . Those who ask for your permission are the ones who believe in Allah and His Messenger . . ." (24:62).

The question raised here is, has belief only five requirements? Two answers are proposed: the assumption is that the five mentioned requirements imply what is not mentioned. For Allah mentions the following requirements: feeling a tremor in one's heart when Allah is mentioned, the strengthening of belief upon hearing Allah's verses, complete reliance on Allah, establishing regular prayer in accordance with Allah's ordinance, and spending the property and gifts Allah has given. It is clear that these five requirements imply unspecified actions. For example, the feeling of a tremor in the heart when Allah is mentioned implies that one apprehends and fears Him. The interpreters of the Qur'ān have explained that the verbs wajilat and fariqat, *fear,* both mean "to fear Allah." Ibn Masʿūd, in his Qur'ānic reading of this verse, read fariqat instead of wajilat: "When the name of Allah is mentioned, their hearts are full of fear [fariqat]." This is valid. For indeed, the meaning of al-wajal, linguistically speaking, is k͟hawf, *fear,* in accordance with the saying 'the redness of shyness and the pallor of fear'. Allah says: "And those who give that which they give with their hearts full of fear (wajilatun), they will return to their Lord" (23:60). ʿĀ'is͟hah asked: "Oh, Messenger of Allah! Does the one who fornicates and steals feel fear of punishment?" Upon this the Prophet answered: "No, daughter of al-Ṣiddīq,[30] it is the one who prays, fasts, and spends the gifts given to him and fears [that these righteous deeds] will not be accepted from him."

[30] Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq was the first Caliph. His daughter ʿĀ'is͟hah, one of the wives of Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh), related a fairly large number of ḥadiths. [*EI,* vol. 1, pp. 307–8.]

Al-Suddī interpreted the Qur'ānic verse, "When Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts," as referring to the one who, whenever he intends and tries to do harm, refrains from doing it. Allah, the Exalted, says: "As for the one who feared to stand before his Lord and restrain his soul from lust, indeed the Garden will be his abode" (79:40–41). Likewise is His saying: "And for he who fears the stand of His Lord, there will be two Gardens" (55:46). Mujāhid and other interpreters said: "A man starts to commit a defiant act then immediately remembers that he stands before Allah, and he abandons committing this act out of fear of Allah."

Since feeling a tremor in the heart when Allah is mentioned implies fear and apprehension of Allah, then this feeling requires one to do what he is commanded and refrain from what he is forbidden to do. Sahl Ibn ʿAbd Allah[31] said: "There is no barrier between Allah and His Servant thicker than being in no need of Allah, and there is no path closer to Allah than being in need of Him." The essence of the good in this life and the Hereafter is the fear of Allah, as indicated in His saying: "When the anger of Moses subsided, he took up the Tablets whose text contained Guidance and Mercy for all those who fear their Lord" (7:154). This verse indicates that guidance and mercy are for those who fear their Lord.

Mujāhid[32] and Ibrāhīm[33] said: "He who fears Allah is the one who, when he intends to commit a sin, remembers Allah and spontaneously refrains from doing it." It was narrated by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā on the authority of Ibn al-Jaʿd,[34] on the authority of Shuʿbah,[35] on the authority of Manṣūr[36] and both of them [Mujāhid and Ibrāhīm]. This is indicated in the following verse of the Qur'ān. Allah says: "But for him who fear the standing before his Lord, there will be two Gardens"

[31] Sahl Ibn ʿAbd Allah, Abu Muḥammad Ibn Yūnis al-Tastarī (200–283 A.H.), was a Ṣūfī scholar who wrote a book on the interpretation of the Qu'rān. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 210 and *Kitab al-Iman*, MZ, pp. 40–41].

[32] Mujāhid Ibn Jabr al-Makkī (21–102 A.H.) compiled a commentary on the Qur'ān that was used by many scholars after him. He was one of the Successors and was connected with the school of tafsīr of Ibn ʿAbbās. [*EI* 2, vol. 7, p. 293 and M. M. Azami, p. 69.]

[33] Ibrāhīm Ibn Yazīd (?–96 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith and tafsīr and one of the Successors. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 41.]

[34] ʿAlī Ibn al-Jaʿd (?–230 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 41.]

[35] Shuʿbah Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (82–160 A.H.) was one of the great scholars of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ p. 41 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 241.]

[36] Mansūr Ibn al-Muʿtamar (?–132 A.H.) was considered an authority on and a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 41.]

(55:46). Those who fear their Lord are those who will prosper, as stated in the saying of Allah: "Those [people] depend on guidance from their Lord, and it is those who will prosper" (2:5). They are the believers and the Allah-fearing ones, who are mentioned in Allah's sayings: "Alif. Lām. Mīm: This is the Book which contains no doubt. It is a guidance to those who fear Allah" (2:1–2). He also mentions in the verse of al-Birr, *Righteousness:* ". . . Those are the people of truth, and they are the Allah-fearing" (2:177). They are the ones who follow the Guidance of the Book, as indicated in Allah's saying: ". . . Whosoever follows My Guidance will not lose his way nor fall into misery" (20:123). Thus, he who does not lose his way is a follower of Allah's Guidance and he who does not fall into misery is blessed. Those are the followers of the straight path upon whom Allah has bestowed His Grace. They include prophets, righteous ones, martyrs, and virtuous people, whose path is not anger, nor that of those who go astray. Accordingly, they deserve Paradise without punishment because they are true believers.

Illustrating this point is the following saying of Allah: ". . . Those who truly fear Allah, among His Servants, who have knowledge . . ." (35:28). This verse means that whosoever truly fears Allah has knowledge, as indicated in another verse. Allah says: "Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of the night prostrating himself or standing [in adoration], who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places his hope in the Mercy of his Lord [like one who does not]? Say [to them, Oh, Muḥammad]: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? . . ." (39:9). The word fear implies to fear Allah and to expect reward from Him; otherwise it would mean despair. Whereas, expectation requires fear; otherwise, it would mean safety. Thus, those who fear and make supplication to Allah are the knowledgeable praised by Him.

It was reported that Abu Ḥayyān al-Taymī said: "The knowledgeable persons are three: a person who is knowledgeable about Allah but not His Commandments, a person knowledgeable about Allah's Commandments but not about Him, and a person knowledgeable about Allah as well as His Commandments. A person knowledgeable about Allah is the one who fears Him, and a person knowledgeable about His Commandments is he who knows what is required and what is prohibited." It was recorded in the *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* collection of ḥadiths, from the Prophet (pbuh), that he said: "I swear by Allah that, among you, I hope, I will be the most

fearful of Allah and the most knowledgeable about His Commandments." If those who fear Allah are the knowledgeable persons, then they should not be criticized because they perform what they are asked to do. This is illustrated in the following verses. Allah says: ". . . But their Lord inspired [this Message] to them: 'Indeed We shall cause the wrong-doers to perish!' and 'Indeed We shall cause you to dwell in the land after them.' This is for anyone who fears My position and fears My threat." (14:13–14) Allah also says: "But for anyone who fears the position of his Lord, there will be two Gardens" (55:46). Those who fear Allah are promised victory in life and reward in the Hereafter because they performed the obligations. Thus fear of Allah requires performing the obligations. This is said to the fājir, *man of bad conduct,* who does not fear Allah, as indicated in the meaning of the following verse. Allah says: "Allah accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterward . . ." (4:17).

Abu al-ʿĀliyah[37] said that he asked the Companions of Muḥammad about this verse: "Allah accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterward," and they told me that everyone who disobeys Allah is ignorant and everyone who repents before death is a repenter of short notice, and so said other interpreters. Mujāhid said: "Every disobedient person is considered ignorant [at the time he is being disobedient]." Al-Ḥassan [al-Baṣrī], Qatādah,[38] ʿAṭāʾ,[39] al-Suddī,[40] and others said: "They are called ignorant not because they are in the state of being disobedient but because they do not recognize that they are being disobedient." Al-Zajjāj[41] said: "This verse does not mean that they do not know that it is evil, for if a Muslim does an evil act and he does not recognize it as an evil act, he will be considered as if he did not do it." However, al-Zajjāj proposed that this verse bears two possible interpretations. One is that they have done evil,

[37] Abu al-ʿĀliyah, Rufayʿ Ibn Mihrān al-Riyāḥī (?–93), was one of the first generation of commentators of the Qurʾān and a collector and transmitter of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 43 and *EI* 2, vol. 1, p. 104.]

[38] Qatādah Ibn Diʿāmah al-Saddūsī (61–117 A.H.) transcribed ḥadith and wrote commentary on the Quʾrān. [M. M. Azami, p. 98.]

[39] ʿAṭāʾ Ibn Abī Rabāḥ (27–117 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith. He encouraged and assisted his students in transcribing ḥadith. [M. M. Azami, p. 80.]

[40] Al-Suddī, Abu Muḥammad Ismāʿīl Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (?–128 A.H.), was famous for his Qurʾānic interpretation. [Sezgin, vol. 1, pp. 77–78.]

[41] Al-Zajjāj, Abu Isḥāq Ibrāhīm Ibn Muḥammad al-Ansārī (?–922 A.D.), was a grammarian who composed a book on the meaning of the Qurʾān. [*al-Fihrist,* vol. 1, pp. 131–33.]

not recognizing its bad consequences. The other is that they do evil, knowing its bad consequences, preferring this life to the Hereafter. Hence, they are called ignorant for their preference of getting the little over the abundant and eternal comfort. Al-Zajjāj viewed jahl, *ignorance,* as either not knowing the consequences of doing evil or bad judgement. Both these issues are interlaced. This issue is addressed in detail in the dialogue with the Jahmites.

Accordingly it can be said that anyone who disobeys Allah is ignorant and anyone one who fears Allah is knowledgeable and obedient to Allah. An individual is ignorant for lacking fear of Allah. For if he fears Him, he does not disobey Him. Supporting this point is the saying of Ibn Masʿūd (may Allah be pleased with him): "Fear of Allah is complete knowledge and Allah's deception is complete ignorance." For indeed having a perception of fear entails fleeing from it, and having a perception of something you desire entails pursuing it. If one does not flee from fear and does not demand the desired, it indicates that one does not have a true perception of it. One may perceive information about it, but having a perception of that information and believing it and even memorizing it letter by letter is different from the perception of the object itself. Likewise, if the perceived entity is neither desired nor disliked, then one starts to believe what is fearful for others as well as liked for others. This does not result in either fleeing from it or requesting it. The same thing applies if one is informed about something either desired or disliked. The informer does not tell a lie but rather recognizes his truthfulness. However, his heart is occupied with other matters beyond the perception of what he is being informed about. The result of all of this initiates neither fleeing nor demanding.

According to a well-known statement by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Knowledge is of two kinds: knowledge of the heart and knowledge of the tongue. Knowledge of the heart is useful while knowledge of the tongue is Allah's proof against His Servants."

Abu Mūsā[42] narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The believer who recites the Qur'ān may be likened to a pear: It tastes good and has a pleasant aroma.

[42] Abu Mūsa al-Ashʿarī ʿAbd Allah Ibn Qays (?–44 A.H.) was a Companion of the Prophet and a military leader. He was in favor of writing and collecting ḥadith. [*EI* 1, 695, al-Ziriklī, vol. 4, p. 254 and M. M. Azami, p. 39.]

However, a believer who does not recite the Qur᾿ān may be likened to a date: It tastes good but has no smell. The hypocrite who recites the Qur᾿ān is like al-rayḥānah plant: It has a nice smell and bitter taste, while a hypocrite who does not recite the Qur᾿ān is like al-ḥanẓalah, *the colocynth:* It has a bitter taste and no smell." This was recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī.* According to this saying, the hypocrite who recites the Qur᾿ān, memorizes it, and understands its meanings may believe that it is the words of Allah and that the Messenger is the truth, yet he will not be a believer. The Jews know that it is the words of Allah and that the Messenger is the truth, just like they know their own children, but they are not believers. Such is the case with Iblīs, *the devil,* Pharaoh, and others. All such people will not attain complete knowledge and understanding, for that inevitably entails that one must behave accordingly. Thus it is said of the one who does not make use of his knowledge that he is ignorant, as was stated earlier.

What is said about the word 'fear' [of Allah] is applicable to the word al-ʿaql, *the intellect.* This word is a verbal noun derived from the verb ʿaqala, *to have intelligence.* Hence, no one is called intelligent except he who knows and does good, and abandons evil. That is why the companions of the Fire said that Allah says: "Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not now be among the companions of the Blazing Fire!" (67:10). Allah says about the hypocrites: ". . . They would think they were united, but their hearts are divided. That is because they are a people devoid of wisdom" (59:14). For, if one does what he knows harms him, then such a person has no intellect. Since fear of Allah requires knowing Him, then knowing Him requires fear of Him, which in turn requires obeying Him. Thus, he who fears Allah does whatever He commands and refrains from whatever He prohibits. This is what we intend to clarify. Supporting this point is Allah's saying: "Therefore remind. Perhaps reminding will benefit [the hearer]. Then the one who fears will heed. But it will be avoided by the most unfortunate ones, who will enter the Great Fire" (87:9–12).

In this verse, Allah says that whoever fears Him remembers. Remembrance requires worshiping Him. Allah says: "He it is Who shows you His Verses, and sends down sustenance for you from the sky: but only those receive admonition who turn [to Allah]" (40:13). And He says: "For an insight and reminder to every servant turning [to Allah]" (50:8). That is why the many interpreters explained His saying: 'The admonition will be received by those who fear [Allah],' meaning that only those who fear Allah will take a lesson from the Qur᾿ān. They also

interpreted His saying: "But only those receive admonition who turn to Allah, meaning that only he who receives admonition turns to Allah's obedience." This is because receiving admonition requires doing what one is admonished to do. For example, if one remembers something he likes, he pursues it, but if he dislikes something, he flees from it. Allah also says: "It is the same to them whether you warn them or not; they will not believe" (36:10).

Allah the Almighty says: "You warn the one who follows the Message and fears the Beneficent in secret . . ." (36:11). The negation of warning is in harmony with Allah's saying: " It is the same to them whether you warn them or not; they will not believe" (36:10). Warning is affirmed in one sense and negated in another. Warning is informing about fearful things, since warning is like instructing and intimidation. Therefore, he whom you instruct will learn and his learning will be complete. Likewise it was said that I instructed him and he did not learn and I intimidated him and he became afraid. On the other hand, for one who is intimidated but does not become afraid, his intimidation is not complete. As when one shows the right way to someone and he accepts guidance, then his guidance is complete, as in Allah's saying: ". . . Guidance is for the righteous ones" (2:2). And to the one who is shown the right way but does not accept it, Allah says: "As for the Thamūd, We gave them guidance but they preferred blindness [of the heart] over guidance . . ." (41:17). In conclusion, one's guidance will not be complete, as is usually stated: You gave advice and it was accepted or you gave advice and it was denied.

A perfect cause must have an effect. However, it is incomplete if it does not have an effect. An act, if it has a suitable setting, is accomplished; otherwise it is not. Having knowledge about something one likes means that he will seek it. Likewise, having knowledge about something one does not like means that he abandons it. This type of knowledge is called al-dāʿī, *the seeker.* It is said that the seeker with the power of knowing requires the existence of the things he seeks as a prerequisite. This happens, provided one has good intent. If one has bad intent, he does not enjoy even pleasant things, but gets hurt by them. Instead, due to his ill intention, he enjoys that which is harmful. In fact, ill intent implies both practical and mental power, and both outward and inward [power], like an ill person who finds everything he tastes is bitter, even honey. His senses are

damaged to the point that he no longer perceives things as they are. The same applies to the one whose inner being is corrupted.

Allah says: ". . . But what will make you [Muslims] realize that even if special Verses came, they would not believe? We shall confound their hearts and their eyes, even as they refused to believe in this at first: We shall leave them in their trespasses, to wander in distraction" (6:109–10).

Allah also says: "And [remember] when Moses said to his people 'O my people! Why do you persecute me, when you know that I am the messenger of Allah [sent] to you? Then when they [the unbelievers] went wrong, Allah let their hearts go wrong . . ." (61:5); and He also says ". . . And their saying: 'Our hearts are ghulf, *covered with wrappings*. No, Allah has placed a seal on their hearts for their unbelief . . .'" (4:155). In this verse the word ghulf is a plural of aghulaf, *a cover that is wrapped in another cover,* just as in an uncircumcised person. Accordingly, the unbelievers' statement that their hearts are covered means that their hearts have been created wrapped up. In response to them Allah says: ". . . No, Allah's curse is on them for their unbelief" (2:88) and ". . .He [Allah] sealed their hearts for their unbelief and little is it which they believe" (4:155). And also Allah says: "And among them are those who listen to you [Muḥammad] until they exit from your presence; then they would say to those who have received knowledge: 'What was that he said just now?' Those are the ones whose hearts Allah has sealed, and they follow their own desires" (47:16).

The unbelievers said that Allah says: "Oh, Shuʿayb! Much of what you say we do not understand! . . ." (11:91). About this, Allah says: "If Allah found in them any good, He would indeed have made them listen . . ." (8:23). That is, Allah would have made them understand what they listened to. He also says: ". . . They would have turned away, averse [to the truth]" (8:23). For indeed their innate nature was corrupted. Hence, they did not understand. Had they understood, they would not have done it. Accordingly, Allah denied them their intellectual and physical powers. He [Allah] says: "Or do you think that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle; nay, they are farther astray from their way" (25:44). Allah also says: "Many are the Jinns and men We have made for Hell: They have hearts but they understand not, eyes but they see not, and ears but they hear not. They are like cattle; nay, but they are worse! For they are heedless [of warning]" (7:179). And He says: "The parable of those who reject belief is as if one were to

shout like a goatherd to things that listen to nothing but calls and cries: Deaf, dumb, and blind, they are void of wisdom" (2:171); and He says that the hypocrites are: "Deaf, dumb, and blind; they [the hypocrites] will not return [to the path]" (2:18).

Some people may say that they did not benefit from hearing, speaking, seeing, and they were made deaf, dumb, and blind. And when they turned away from hearing, seeing, and speaking they became like the deaf, the blind, and the dumb. This is really not so. Rather, their own hearts became blind, deaf, and dumb, as Allah, the Exalted, says: ". . . Truly it is not the eyes that are blind but the hearts that are in their breasts" (22:46). Consequently, the heart is considered the king and the other organs are its soldiers. Thus, when the heart is pure the whole body is pure, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Therefore, one would continue to hear the sounds with the ears just like the animals hear, but he does not understand the meaning. Indeed, even when he does understand something, he will not comprehend it completely. For complete understanding requires an affect on the heart by the thing that is loved and hating the thing that is disliked. When people become like animals complete perception is not accomplished, then it becomes permissible to negate it. For indeed, what is not completely comprehended is negated, as in the Prophet's saying to the person who made a mistake while he was performing his prayer: "Go and pray again, you did not pray correctly." In conclusion, Iman is negated when it is not in the heart.

Allah has characterized the believers as those who when He is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His Verses rehearsed, find their belief strengthened. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk[43] understood this to mean that their Iman was increased and strengthened. While al-Rabīᶜ Ibn Anas[44] interpreted it to mean fear of Allah. Yet, Ibn ᶜAbbās interpreted it as confirming belief in Allah. The two characteristics of feeling a tremor and strengthening the belief of a believer are mentioned in many verses of the Qur'ān. For example, Allah says: "Has not the time arrived for the believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth that has been revealed [to them], and that

[43] Al-Ḍaḥḥāk Ibn Muzāḥim (40–105 A.H.) wrote a commentary on the Qur'ān. [M. M. Azami, p. 64.]

[44] Al-Rabīᶜ Ibn Anas (?–139 A.H.) was a narrator and collector of ḥadith and worked on Qur'ānic interpretation. [Fu'ād.Sezgin, *Ta'rīkh al-Turāth al-ᶜArabī*, vol. 1, pp. 79–80.]

they should not become like those to whom the Book was given before; but a long time has passed and their hearts have grown hard? For many among them are grave sinners" (57:16).

The word khushūʿ, *humility*, implies two meanings: One is humility and submissiveness, while the other is calmness and tranquility, which require a tenderness of the heart that is contrary to harshness. Thus, a humble heart implies its worship of Allah as well as tranquility; hence, humbling oneself in prayer implies both humility and tranquility. The word 'humble' cited in the verse: "Those [the believers] who humble themselves in their prayers" (23:2) means to Ibn ʿAbbās that the believers are in a state of submissiveness; according to al-Ḥassan and Qatādah, they are in a state of fear while praying before Allah. Also they are, according to Muqātil,[45] in a state of humility. To ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib[46] this means humility in the heart, showing that one's disposition should be tender toward fellow Muslims, and that while praying one should not turn to the right or to the left. Mujāhid said it means to lower the gaze and to be responsive. When a man gets up and is ready to pray he will be in a state of humbling himself to Allah, his gaze will not wander, and he will not busy himself thinking about worldly matters.

ʿAmr Ibn Dinār[47] stated that the word *humility* does not only mean bowing down or prostrating but it means tranquility and perfection of performance in prayer. Ibn Sīrīn[48] and others narrated that while praying the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions used to raise their eyes toward the sky and turn to the right and left until the following verse was revealed. Allah says: "The believers are indeed the successful ones. Those who humble themselves in their prayers" (23:1–2). Afterward they turned their faces toward wherever they prostrated and, from then on, none of them was seen looking at anything except the ground where they prostrated. ʿAṭā' said that being humble in prayer means not making any gesture

[45] Muqātil Abu Ḥassan Ibn Sulaymān (?–150 A.H.) compiled several books and a commentary on the Qur'ān. [M. M. Azami, p. 157 and Sezgin, vol. 1, pp. 85–86.]

[46] ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (?–40 A.H.) was a cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, and was the Fourth Caliph. [*EI* 2, vol. 1, pp. 381–86 and M. M. Azami, p. 47.]

[47] ʿAmr Ibn Dinār, Abu Muhammad (46–126 A.H.), transmitted ḥadith and was a scholar of fiqh. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 5, p. 245 and M. M. Azami, p. 79.]

[48] Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn (33–110 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith. It was reported that he opposed writing down ḥadith. [M. M. Azami, p. 94.]

with any part of your body while praying. When the Prophet (pbuh) saw a man making a gesture with his beard while praying, He said: "Had he had a humble heart, all the parts of his body would have been humble too." The word khushūʿ, *humility,* will be explained later, in shāʾa Allah.

A humble body follows a humble heart, if one is not two-faced [tries to show what is not really in his heart]. It has been narrated: "Seek refuge in Allah from the hypocrisy of humbleness" [having a humble body but not heart]. For Allah Himself urges the believers by saying: "Has not the time arrived for the believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth . . ." (57:16). He commands them to have humble hearts every time He and His Book are mentioned. He [Allah] also forbids them from being like those to whom revelation was given in earlier times, but ages passed and their hearts grew hard. Allah says: ". . . Those, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts when His Words are mentioned and find their belief strengthened . . ." (7:2).

Allah says in another verse: "Allah has revealed the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book consistent with itself. The skins of those who fear their Lord tremble, then their skins and their hearts soften with their remembrance of Allah . . ." (39:23).Thus, those [believers] who fear their Lord, they are the ones who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble.

When it is said that it is an obligation to have a humble heart when Allah and His revelation are mentioned, the response would be in the affirmative. However, people who humble themselves in their prayers belong to two groups. One follows a middle course and the other surpasses others in good deeds. The latter group includes people who perform desirable deeds. However, the former group represents all the believers who deserve Paradise. Whosoever is not a member of either of these two groups wrongs his soul. In the following sound ḥadith the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Oh, Allah, I seek refuge in you from useless knowledge, a heart that is not humble, a dissatisfied soul, and an unanswered prayer."

Allah also condemns hard-heartedness, which is contrasted with a humble heart, in many verses of the Qurʾān. He says: "Then were your hearts hardened: then they became like a rock, and even worse, in hardness . . ." (2:74). Al-Zajjāj said that the verb qasat, linguistically speaking, means *it became thick, dry,* and

withered. Thus, hard-heartedness implies a lack of tenderness, mercy, and humility of the heart. The person with the harsh and weak heart is the one with the stiff and hardened heart. Ibn Qutaybah said: "The following verbs—qasat, ʿasat, and ʿatat—all mean yabisat, *become dry.* The blessed power of the heart is different from the condemned harshness of the heart. For indeed the heart ought to be strong but not harsh, tender but not weak, as in the tradition which states that hearts are the vessels of Allah on His earth; the most beloved to Him are the most firm, the most tender, and the most pure. This resembles the hand, it is strong yet tender. This is in contrast to the hardened stub, which is dry and lacks tenderness even though it possesses strength. Allah the Almighty mentions that the heart trembles at the time of His remembrance. The belief will increase both in knowledge and in deed when reciting the Book of Allah.

It is necessary to put one's complete reliance and obedience in Allah for whatever one can do and cannot do. The basis of this is the performance of prayer, giving zakah, and fulfilling the remaining five [pillars], as Allah commanded. A servant of Allah has to obey Him by doing what He commands, by fulfilling all the obligations, one of which is prayer. Prayer, if performed well, prevents one from committing evil. As narrated on the authority of Ibn Masʿūd and Ibn ʿAbbās: "Prayer forbids and restrains one from disobeying Allah. Thus, he whose prayer does not restrain him from evil, the more he prays, the more his prayer draws him away from Allah." The meaning of the latter part of this saying, "draws him away from Allah," is that if a person abandons the obligatory prayer, it is of greater harm than the deeds he has performed. Abandoning the obligatory prayer drives him away from Allah even if he performs little of the obligatory duties, as stated in the following sound ḥadith of the Prophet (pbuh): "Such is the prayer of the hypocrite; he observes the sun until it sets between the two horns of Satan, then he stands up to pray and makes four genuflections in which he scarcely holds Allah in remembrance at all." Allah says: "The hypocrites, they think they are deceiving Allah, but He will overreach them: When they stand up for prayer, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance" (4:142). ʿAmmār narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah may record only one-half, one-third, or even one-tenth of His Servant's prayer. For when he prays, little does he hold Allah in remembrance." Ibn ʿAbbās also narrated: "You get nothing from your prayer except that you hold Allah in remembrance." Nevertheless, if while praying, one holds Allah little in

remembrance, although he is not obliged to pray again, he is commanded to make up for the loss of his incomplete prayer by performing other voluntary deeds. And it is well-known that whoever strictly guards and humbles himself implicitly and explicitly in his prayers and fears Allah, as he is commanded, performs the obligations. The believer will never commit a kabīrah, *grave sin.* For he who commits grave sins such as adultery, theft, or drinking wine, it is inevitable that fear, humility, and light will abandon his heart, even though he still has the essence of taṣdīq, *assent,* in his heart. Committing a grave sin will remove Iman from him. This is indicated in the Prophet's(pbuh) saying: "The fornicator who fornicates is no longer a believer as long as he continues to commit it, and no thief who steals is a believer as long as he continues to commit theft." For indeed those fear Allah, as Allah described them in His saying: "Those who fear Allah, when a thought of evil from Satan assaults them, bring Allah to remembrance. Lo! they are able to see " (7:201) Thus, when a thought of evil assaults the believers' hearts, they will remember Allah and become aware of their sins.

Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr[49] said: "When in a state of rage a believer remembers Allah, he will then suppress his anger." Layth[50] narrated on the authority of Mujāhid: "The believer is a man who, when at the point of committing a sin, remembers Allah, then does not commit the sin. Lust and anger are the initiators of sin. He who heeds would refrain." Concerning the unbelievers, Allah says: "But their brethren [the evil ones] plunge them deeper into error, and never relax [their efforts]" (7:202). That is, Satan plunges their brothers deeper into error, and never relaxes his efforts. Ibn 'Abbās said: "Neither men nor Satan relax their efforts." Thus, if one does not remember Allah when he intends to commit evil, he does not see right; and Satan plunges him deeper into error. Thus, he becomes just like the one who, when he closes his eyes, becomes unable to see although he is not blind. So he whose heart is full of sin, does not see righteousness although he is not blind like an unbeliever.

[49] Sa'īl Ibn Jubayr al-Asdī (46–95 A.H.) compiled a commentary on the Qur'ān and also recorded ḥadith, especially the ḥadiths that were reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn' Umar. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 145 and M. M. Azami, p. 70.]

[50] Layth Ibn Abī Sulaym (?–138 A.H) was a well-known scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 51.]

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal reported from the book of ḥadiths on the authority of Yaḥyā,[51] on the authority Ashʿath[52], on the authority of al-Ḥassan [al-Baṣrī] that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Iman will be taken away from him and when he repents it will be restored to him." Also, Aḥmad said, that Yaḥyā reported on the authority of ʿAwf[53] that al-Ḥassan said: "Iman will stay away from him as long as he continues to commit sins; if he reconsiders, Iman will come back to him." Aḥmad also said on the authority of Muʿāwiyyah,[54] on the authority of Abu Isḥāq,[55] on the authority of al-Awzāʿī,[56] that Aḥmad said to al-Zuhrī[57] when he mentioned the following ḥadith: "The fornicator does not fornicate while he is a believer," then they said: "If he is not a believer then what is he?" He replied: "He ignored that and disliked my question about it." Aḥmad also stated on the authority of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Mahdī, on the authority of Sufyān, on the authority of Ibrāhīm Ibn Muhājir,[58] on the authority of Mujāhid, on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, that he said to his ghulmān, *boys*: "He who among you desires to get married, we will arrange it. Furthermore, anyone from among you who will commit an act of fornication, Allah will deprive him of the light of Iman. If Allah desires to restore Iman to him, He will; but if He wishes to deprive him of it, He will." Abu Dāʾūd al-Sijistānī[59]

[51] Yaḥyā Ibn Zakariyyah (?–148 A.H.) was considered one of the trustworthy scholars of ḥadith and a reciter of the Qurʾān. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 52.]

[52] Ashʿath Ibn Sawwār al-Kindī (80–136 A.H.) was a scholar and compiler of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 52.]

[53] ʿAwf Ibn Abī Jamīlah (59–146 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 52 and M. M. Azami, p. 81.]

[54] Muʿāwiyyah Abu ʿAmr Ibn al-Muhllab al-Azdī (?–214 A. H.) was a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 52.]

[55] Abu Isḥāq al-Fazārī (?–188 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith and transmitted ḥadith mostly from al-Awzāʿī, who also transmitted ḥadith on his authority. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 52.]

[56] Al-Awzāʿī, Abu ʿAmr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn ʿAmr (88–157 A.H.), was the main representative of the Syrian school of religious law. [*EI* 2, vol. 1, p. 772 and al-Ziriklī vol. 4, p. 94.]

[57] Al-Zuhrī, Muḥammad Ibn Muslim Ibn Shihāb (51–124 A.H.), was a well-known scholar of ḥadith and many of his students made collections of ḥadith based on his books and lectures. [M. M. Azami, pp. 88–89.]

[58] Ibrāhīm Ibn Muhājir Abu Isḥāq (n.d.) was a scholar of ḥadith who transmitted ḥadith from both Mujāhid and Ibrāhīm. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 53.]

[59] Abu Dāʾūd al-Sijistānī, Sulaymān Ibn al-Ashʿath (202-275 A.H.), was a well-known scholar of ḥadith and his principle work, *Kitab al-Sunan*, is considered one of the six canonical books of ḥadith. [*EI* 2, vol. 1, p. 114.]

said that ʿAbd al-Wahāb Ibn Najdah[60] reported on the authority of Baqiyyah Ibn al-Walīd,[61] on the authority of Ṣafwān Ibn ʿAmr, on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn Rabīʿah al-Ḥaḍramī, that he had informed him on authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet used to say: "Iman is like a garment, one puts it on at one time and takes it off at another." It was also narrated by ʿUmar, with full isnād, *chain of transmission.* In addition, it was narrated on the authority of al-Ḥassan from the Prophet (pbuh) as a ḥadith mursal.[62] Supporting this point is a saying of the Prophet (pbuh) narrated by Abu Hurayrah: "When the fornicator fornicates, Iman leaves him and it becomes like a shade. If he abandons sin, Iman will be restored to him." The transmission of this ḥadith is marfūʿ.[63] This will be fully explained later, in shāʾa Allah.

[60] ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Ibn Najdah (?–232 A.H.) was a traditionalist and a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 53.]

[61] Baqiyyah Ibn al-Walīd (110–196 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith and transcribed ḥadḥith from many sources, without discrimination. [M. M. Azami, p. 125.]

[62] A ḥadith designated mursal has its isnād, chain of transmission, from a Successor directly to the Prophet, and not through a Companion.

[63] A ḥadith designated marfūʿ, has an isnād that can be traced back to the Prophet, though it may be broken somewhere.

Chapter Two

Adherence to the Words of Allah and His Messenger

Dispute Concerning the Authenticity of Certain Ḥadiths

Some people have disputed the authenticity of certain ḥadiths. Among such sayings is: "No prayer is accepted without ablution and no ablution is accepted without mentioning Allah's name." The first part of this ḥadith is to be understood as in the Prophet's saying: "There is no prayer without ṭuhūr, *purification*."[1] This is agreed upon among Muslims since ṭuhūr is obligatory before performing prayer. If the obligatory ṭuhūr, is negated, then the prayer is negated. Concerning the second part of the ḥadith, there is a well-known dispute about whether it is obligatory to mention Allah's name or not when performing ablution. Most scholars of the Mālikī, Ḥanafī, and S͟hāfiʿī schools do not consider it obligatory. This is, however, one of the two opinions on the authority of Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] that has been accepted by al-K͟hirqī,[2] Abu Muḥammad[3] and others. The second, which is also on the authority of Aḥmad and is accepted by some scholars, makes mentioning Allah's name when making ablution obligatory. Among them are Abu

[1] The complete text of this ḥadith reads: The Prophet (pbuh) said: "No prayer is accepted without purification and no charity is accepted from the g͟hulūl, *dishonest person*."

[2] Al-K͟hirqī, ʿUmar Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿAbd Allah Ibn Aḥmad (?–334 A.H.), was a famous Ḥanbalī jurist from Bag͟hdad. [Ibn Badrān, ʿAbd al-Qādir. *al-Madk͟hal Ilā Mad͟hab al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal,* 2d. ed. Edited by ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī. Beirut, 1981 [this work is referred to in the text as Ibn Badrān, *al-Madk͟hal],* pp. 416–17 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 54.]

[3] Abu Muḥammad, Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥanbalī (?–620 A.H.), was a scholar of fiqh. He wrote two books about jurisprudence, *al-Kāfī* and *al-Muqniʿ*. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 54.]

Bakr ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and the judge Abu Yaʿlā[4] and his followers. The Prophet also said: "No prayer is accepted from the neighbor of the mosque except in the mosque itself" (recorded by al-Dāraquṭnī).[5] Some scholars consider this ḥadith marfūʿ; while other scholars consider it as the words of ʿAlī [Ibn Abī Ṭālib], may Allah be pleased with him. Still others among them, such as ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq,[6] have confirmed its authenticity. The Prophet also said: "No fast is accepted from the one who broods the fast at night." This ḥadith was narrated by scholars of the books of *al-Sunan, Books of Ḥadith,* who said that it is not correct to consider it marfūʿ, but it is correct to consider it mawqūf,[7] on the authority of Ibn ʿUmar and Ḥafṣah.[8] It is not right for anyone to attest to words of the Messenger in order to fulfill a wish to negate a desire for perfection. Definitely if these words of the Prophet were correctly and properly claimed, then they would fulfill an obligation, otherwise they would not. For nothing can negate the essence of the Book and the Sunnah. It is very important to know what is intended by the words of Allah and His Messenger before anyone uses them in order to suit his own ma<u>dh</u>hab, *school of law.* The statements of the scholars should follow the words of Allah and His Messenger, and not the reverse.

If there is a dispute concerning an obligatory matter among the religious scholars, the words of Allah have clear significance in this regard. Then it is not permissible to negate the well-known essence of the words of Allah and His Messenger by the disputed sayings of the scholars. But some people grew up knowing only one line

[4] Abu Yaʿlā, Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥusayn (?–458 A.H.) was a well-known Ḥanbalī jurist. He wrote several books, among which are *al-Khilāf al-Kabīr* and *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah.* [Ibn Badrān *al-Madkhal,* p. 417.]

[5] Al-Dāraquṭnī, Abu al-Ḥassan ʿAlī Ibn ʿUmar (306–385 A.H.), was born in one of the large quarters of Baghdād called Dār al-Quṭn, where he obtained his nisbah. He was a man of wide learning, including ḥadith, recitation of the Qur'ān, and fiqh. He contributed greatly to the critical study of ḥadith. Some of his well-known books are *Kitab al-Sunan* and *Kitab ʿIlal al-Ḥadith,* which deal with the causes and weaknesses of the study of ḥadith. [*EI* 2, vol. 2, p. 136 and Sezgin, vol 1, pp. 418–24.]

[6] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, Abu Mūhammad Ibn ʿAbd Raḥmān, also known as Ibn al-Kharrāṭ (?–581 A.H.), was a jurist and a scholar of ḥadith. He wrote a book entitled *al-Muʿtal Min al-Ḥadith* concerning weaknesses of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 54.]

[7] Ḥadith mawqūf is the type of ḥadith whose isnād, *chain of transmission,* goes back to a Companion who received it from the Prophet (pbuh).

[8] Ḥafṣah, daughter of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and wife of the Prophet, was born about five years before Prophet Muḥammad's mission. [*EI* 2, vol. 3, p. 63–65.]

of thought of a particular madhab. Those people believed that their opinion constitutes the religion in its totality. It is like the person who prays alone and not in congregation, thinking that he has completely fulfilled his obligation. The truth of the matter is that scholars have two well-known opinions concerning the reward of such a prayer. In the madhab of Ahmad [Ibn Hanbal] two opinions on this matter were expressed. The first opinion is of the older followers, represented by the judge Abu Yaʿlā, in explaining their madhab. The latter group, represented by Ibn ʿAqīl[9] and others, said: "It is permissible for one to pray the prescribed prayers alone, without excuse; he is like the one who prays the noon Friday prayer. If he could perform it in congregation after that, he should do so; otherwise it would result in a sin similar to that of the one who abandons the Friday prayer. In this case he could still receive repentance." The source of this statement is tendered by more than one among the scholars, and most of the reported traditions from the earlier Muslims, Companions, and Successors also support this.

The religious scholars affirmed and based their opinions on the hadith of the Prophet (pbuh), who said: "Anyone who hears the call for prayer [at the masjid] and does not respond without having an excuse, his prayer will not be accepted." Some scholars responded by referring to hadith al-Tafdīl,[10] that it is in the realm of al-maʿdhūr', *the excused,* who is permitted to pray alone. It was also affirmed that the Prophet said: "The prayers of a man who performs [his prayers] while sitting counts as only half of the prayer performed while standing, and the prayer of the one lying down counts as only half of the prayer of the one who is sitting." What is meant by "the excused one" mentioned above is that if someone becomes sick while praying, he will be excused. He also said that none of the earlier Muslims permitted the voluntary prayer while lying down without an excuse and none of them practiced this. However, it was permitted in one instance by the madhabs of al-Shāfiʿī[11] and Ahmad [Ibn Hanbal], and its source from earlier

[9] Ibn ʿAqīl, Abu al-Wafā' ʿAlī Ibn ʿAqīl (431–513 A.H.), was a well-known Hanbalī jurist and theologian and is considered one of the great scholars of Islamic religious thought. [*EI* 2, vol. 3, pp. 699–700 and Ibn Badrān, *al-Mudkhal,* pp. 410 and 416.]

[10] Hadith al-Tafdīl, *preference,* is reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet (pbuh): "The prayer in congregation is preferred twenty-five [in some versions twenty-seven] times over praying alone."

[11] Al-Shāfiʿī, Abu ʿAbd Allah Muhammad Ibn Idrīs (150–204 A.H.), was the founder of the Shafiʿī school of law and a scholar of fiqh and hadith. His most famous work is *al-Umm.* [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 6, p. 249 and *EI,* old edition 1987, vol. 7, p. 252.]

Muslims is not known. Indeed, this question could spread and bring calamity among the Muslims. If it were permissible for every Muslim to perform his voluntary prayer lying on his side when he is well, and not sick, it would be just as permissible to perform voluntary prayer while sitting or while riding on a camel. The Messenger (pbuh) would certainly have pointed this out to his community and the Companions would have known it. Since there is a strong desire to do good, it is inevitable that some would do it. However, no one of them did that, thus this indicates that this practice was not allowed among the Muslims. This will be explained more fully in the proper place.

What is intended here is that the Muslims should seriously value the words of Allah and His Messenger, and no one is permitted to transmit the words of other people except as they were originally intended, and not what they have been interpreted to mean. Some people may interpret certain texts of the Qur'ān that express thoughts that are contrary to what they believe in terms that suit their thinking and their behavior. The intention behind this is to use a certain text as a proof, and this is wrong. We must believe in all that Allah and His Messenger said, for indeed we cannot believe in some parts of the Book and disbelieve in other parts. Thus, being careful of what is intended in one of the two versions of a particular text, without considering the other, is not necessarily good. Therefore, if the text is in harmony with what one believes, then follow what the Messenger intended. The same is true for the interpretation of other such texts. What is intended to be known is what the Messenger desired. This is what is intended in the explanation and interpretation of any situation in which two different meanings are possible. Anyone who merges the two into a single meaning, as is often the case among the interpreters, considers ta'wīl to be like tafsīr. But the real meaning of ta'wīl, with regard to the words of Allah and His Messenger, is different from the meaning of tafsīr, as commonly understood by the people, and its meaning is also different from what is meant by later religious scholars. This will be explained fully in its proper place.

Indeed everything that Allah and His Messenger negated concerning the obligatory constituents—such as Iman, Islam, religion, prayers, fasting, purification, pilgrimage, and other such obligation—was simply because the practice of such obligatory constituents has been abandoned. Allah says: "But no, by your Lord, they can have no belief, until they make you judge in all disputes

between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, and submit with full submission" (4:65). This verse indicates that one's belief is negated if he does not regard the Messenger as a judge in all his disputes, and hence it is an obligation for belief. On the contrary, whoever does not acknowledge the Messenger as a judge should be punished, as he lacks the true belief required for entering Paradise without punishment. It is well known that whosoever performs some obligations but neglects others is subject to punishment.

Also, Muslims unanimously agree that it is an obligation to regard the Messenger as a judge in all disputes, both in matters pertaining to their religion and in their worldly affairs. This applies to the essence of their religion as well as to its various branches. Thus they should find in their souls no resistance to the Prophet's judgments in disputes between themselves, but accept those decisions with the fullest conviction. Allah says: "Have you not turned your vision to those who declare that they believe in the revelations that have come to you and to those before you? Their real wish is to resort together for judgment in their disputes to the tāghūt', *the evil one,* though they were ordered to reject him. But Satan's wish is to lead them far astray from the right. When it was said to them: 'Come to what Allah has revealed, and to the Messenger,' you will see the hypocrites avert their faces from you in disgust" (4:60–61).

His [Allah] saying, "to what Allah revealed" refers to the Book and Wisdom as illustrated in the following verses. Allah says: ". . . Remember Allah's favors to you, and that He revealed to you *al-Kitāb wal-Ḥikmah,* the Book and the Wisdom, for your instruction . . ." (2:231); and ". . . For Allah has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom and taught you what you did not know: and great is the grace of Allah unto you" (4:113). The call to acknowledge what Allah reveals indicated in "come to what Allah revealed, and to the Messenger," requires the call to acknowledge the Messenger, which in turn requires the call to accept what Allah reveals. Such a mutual connection is found between obedience to Allah and to His Messenger. That is, whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah, and whoever obeys Allah obeys the Messenger.

This connection is also found in the following verse. Allah says: "If anyone opposes the Messenger, even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, he

follows a path other than the believers' way . . ." (4:115). Thus, whoever opposes the Messenger, even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, follows a path other than that becoming to men of belief; and whoever follows a path other than that becoming to men of belief, opposes the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him. This asserts the mutual connection between Allah and His Messenger. Therefore, if one thinks that he is following the way of the believers while he is wrong, he will be in the same position of the one who thinks that he is following the Messenger, yet he is wrong too.

The Consensus of the Believers Is Used as a Proof

The above mentioned Qur'ānic verse, "If anyone opposes the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of belief," indicates that the believers ijmāʿ, *consensus of opinion,* is used as a proof. Therefore, disagreement with them is mutually connected to disagreement with the Messenger, because whatever the believers unanimously agreed on was based on naṣṣ, *words or evidence,* from the Messenger. Thus, every unanimously resolved issue is certainly true, while disagreeing with such unanimity leads to unbelief, exactly like disagreeing with al-naṣṣ al-bayyin, *the clear text* [Qur'ān]. However, if unanimity is not decisive, then disagreeing with it may not lead to unbelief. For it may happen that the indecisive unanimity is false and that the truth is something else.

A question was posed concerning ijmāʿ, *consensus of opinion.* Does it mean qaṭʿiyyun, *definitive,* or ẓanniyyun, *mere assumption?* Some people use it in the affirmative and some in the negative. The truth is clear, it is considered as a consensus of opinion and, for certain, there is no dispute to begin with among the believers. This matter must be decided upon justly. This is exactly what the Messenger pointed out as al-hudā, *the guidance.* This is explained fully elsewhere.

When specific aspects of an obligation are described with interconnected attributes, this is an indication that any attribute will become a duty that must be followed. This is the Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm, *Straight Path,* which Allah commands us to follow as guidance. Indeed, this means Islam, following the Qur' ān, and obedience to Allah and His Messenger. It is also the way to worship Allah

correctly. All the attributes, regardless of how numerous they may be, eventually lead to the obligation of worshiping Allah. These attributes are similar to the different names of Allah, the Exalted, the names of His Book, and the names of His Messenger. These are all like the names of His religion. Thus every constituent and its attributes refer to one and the same thing.

Allah says: "And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah stretches out for you, and be not divided among yourselves . . ." (3:103). In this verse, the phrase ḥabl Allah, *Allah's rope,* has the following interpretations: Dīn al-Islam, *the religion of Islam,* the Qur'ān, Allah's Covenant, Allah's Obedience and Commands, and the Muslim community. And all of these are ḥaqq, *true.*

Connotation of the Book, the Sunnah, and Ijmāʿ as One

Accordingly, the three constituents--the Book, the Sunnah, *traditions,* and ijmāʿ, *consensus of opinion,* should have the same connotation. For whatever is in the Book is agreed upon by the Messenger, and the Muslim community in its totality is in agreement on this matter. Indeed, all the believers must follow the Book as an obligation. The same applies to the Sunnah. That is, whatever is in the Sunnah, the Qur'ān commands that it be followed; so do the believers. Similarly, whatever Muslims unanimously agree on is nothing other than the truth consistent with what is in the Book and the Sunnah. For Muslims learn about their religion from the Messenger, who had true Revelations revealed to him: the Qur'ān and Wisdom. The Messenger (pbuh) said: "I have received the Book, along with it, and the like of it [wisdom]."

Ḥassān Ibn ʿAṭiyyah[12] said: "Gabriel used to descend to the Prophet (pbuh) to teach him the Sunnah as well as to teach him the Qur'ān." For not everything included in the Sunnah is necessarily interpreted in the Qur'ān. This is contrary to what people of ijmāʿ say must be inferred from both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. For the Messenger was a mediator between Allah and the people by transmitting His commands, His permission, and His prohibitions.

[12] Ḥassān Ibn ʿAṭiyyah, Abu Bakr al-Muḥāribī (?–130 A.H.), was one of the scholars of ḥadith in Syria and also one of al-Awzāʿī's teachers. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 59.]

SOME OF THE SIGNS OF IMAN

Illustrating the above point are the following sayings of the Prophet (pbuh): "A person who believes in Allah and the Last Day never nurses a grudge against the al-Anṣār, *the Helpers,"* and "The love of al-Anṣār is the sign of Iman, and hatred against them is the sign of hypocrisy." For whoever knows what al-Anṣār did for the Prophet, like obeying Allah and supporting His Messenger, and loves Allah and His Messenger, definitely loves al-Anṣār, which is in turn a sign of heartfelt belief. However, for he who hates them, Allah has ordained no belief in his heart.

Whoever does not have hatred in his heart against what Allah and His Messenger hate—what He prohibits like unbelief, sin, and rebellion—does not have true belief in his heart. To put it differently, whoever does not hate what Allah prohibits, does not have belief, as will be indicated later, in s͟hāʾa Allah. Likewise, whoever does not love his brother, the believer, that which he loves for himself, does not have true belief, for Allah does not negate one's belief unless he abandons part of that required belief. Hence, he will be one of those subject to punishment, and he does not deserve Paradise without punishment.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever cheats us is not one of us and whoever takes up arms against us is not one of us," for if one neglects an obligation or commits what Allah and His Messenger prohibit, his true belief is negated and he is not one of the believers who deserve Paradise without punishment.

Likewise, Allah says: "They say, we believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey: then after that, a group of them turn away: they are not believers. And when they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that He may judge between them, behold, a group of them decline. If the right is on their side, they come to Him with all submission. Is it that there is an affliction in their hearts? Or do they doubt? Or are they in fear that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them? No, it is they themselves who are wrongdoers. The answer of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, is no other than this. They say: 'We hear and we obey.' Those are the successful ones" (24:47–51). Indeed, the word Iman, *belief,* if used in an absolute sense in the sayings of Allah and His Messenger, indicates fulfilling one's obligations and abandoning what is prohibited. Thus, whoever Allah and His Messenger declared to be without belief, must have abandoned an obligation or

committed something prohibited. Hence, he is subject to punishment and does not deserve Paradise without punishment.

The same applies to Allah's saying: "... Allah has endeared belief to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you unbelief, sin, and rebellion: such indeed are the righteousness ones" (49:7).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE WITH REGARD TO IMAN

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī said that some acts of disobedience can be classified as unbelief but others cannot. Three kinds are noted: kufr, *unbelief*; fusūq, *sin,* but not kufr; and ʿIṣyān, *rebellion,* which is neither unbelief nor sin. All these are made hateful to believers. And since all acts of obedience comprise one's belief, they are not divided into kinds. Allah endears belief, obligations, and all acts of obedience to believers. Indeed, He combines them all by saying: "... Allah has endeared belief to you. . ." (49:7). Here, the word *belief* implies all acts of obedience. For example, Allah endears prayer, zakah, and all acts of obedience to the believers. He says that He endears belief to them and has made it beautiful in their hearts: "... Allah endears belief to you ... (49:7). He also makes hateful to the believers all acts of disobedience, whether unbelief or sin. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever's good deed pleases him and his bad deed displeases him is a believer." For Allah endears good deeds and makes bad deeds hateful to believers.

Concerning this, the author remarks: making all kinds of disobedience hateful requires liking all kinds of obedience. Thus, abandoning acts of obedience leads to disobedience. It is inevitable that the heart should have a will. If one hates all evil, then he must love the good. Whatever is a lawful act through good intent is good, and by bad intent is evil. Thus an act is performed willingly and by one's own desire. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "The most beloved names to Allah are ʿAbd Allah and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, and the most sincere names are Ḥāri<u>th</u> and Humām, and the ugliest of names are Ḥarb and Murrah, as these two names mean war and bitter respectively."

The reason that the Prophet said that Ḥāri<u>th</u> and Humām are sincere names is because every human being is Ḥāri<u>th</u> or Humām. The literal meaning of Ḥāri<u>th</u> is *the one who works and earns,* and the literal meaning of Humām is *the generous*

and heroic one. Every person is considered sensitive by his own will. If one does a lawful deed, he must have an ultimate goal related either to himself or to others. For if his ultimate goal is worshiping none but Allah and if Allah is dearer to him than anything else, then this will lead him to the love of Allah. Consequently, a person is rewarded for his lawful deeds, through which he aims at obeying Allah, as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* from the Prophet (pbuh), who said: "What a man spends on his family is recorded by Allah as charity." When the Prophet visited Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ,[13] who fell ill in Makkah, he said to him: "Whenever you make an expenditure for the sake of Allah, you will be raised to a higher degree, even when you place a morsel in the mouth of your wife." Muʿādh Ibn Jabal[14] said to Abu Mūsā: "Indeed, I am reckoning when I go to sleep and I am reckoning when I get up." A certain tradition also stated that the sleep of a religious scholar is reckoning to [praising] Allah.

Nevertheless, if one's basic goal is worshiping anyone other than Allah, good things are not made lawful for him. For Allah makes good things lawful for the believers among His servants. Indeed, unbelievers, criminals, and the sinful will be questioned on the Day of Judgment about every kind of joy they indulged in, without being grateful to Allah or worshiping Him. Allah says: ". . . You received good things in the life of this world, and you took your pleasure out of them; but today you will be recompensed with a penalty of humiliation: for you were arrogant on earth without just cause, and that you ever transgressed" (46:20). Allah also says: "Then, you will be questioned on that Day about al-naʿīm, *the pleasure,* you indulged in!" (102:8); that is, you will be questioned about praising Allah. The unbeliever does not praise Allah for the pleasure he indulges in; therefore, he will be punished. By contrast, Allah makes these pleasures lawful for believers to indulge in and commands them to praise Him for this. He [Allah] says: " Oh you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah . . ." (2:172).

[13] Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Abu Isḥāq (?–675 A.D.), was a Companion of the Prophet, a military leader, and a governor. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 139.]

[14] Muʿādh Ibn Jabal (?–18 A.H.) was a very close Companion of the Prophet, a great supporter of Islam, and a transmitter of ḥadith. The Prophet sent him on missions, the most famous of which was when he led a delegation to Yemen, where he was appointed (by the Prophet) as a judge of that country. In addition, he helped to collect the revelations of the Qur'ān. [M. M. Azami, p. 53 and *al-Fihrist,* vol. 2, p. 1045.]

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "May Allah be gracious to a servant of His who praises Him when he eats food and praises Him when he drinks" (recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*). Similarly, in the *Sunun of Ibn Mājah* and others, it is said: "The grateful eater is in the same status as the one who fasts patiently."

Allah says to the Messengers: "Oh Messengers! Eat all good things and do righteous deeds . . ." (23:51). Allah also says: ". . . Lawful for you [as food] is any livestock animal, with the exceptions named. What is not permitted are animals of the chase while you are in the state of pilgrimage . . ." (5:1). Al-Khalīl, [the Prophet Abraham] said that Allah says: ". . . And feed His people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day . . ." (2:126); and Allah says: ". . . As for the one who rejects belief, I will grant him his pleasure for a short period, but will soon drive him to the torment of Fire, an evil destination indeed!" (2:126). Thus, al-Khalīl prayed that Allah would grant good things, particularly to the believers; Allah permits livestock for food but forbids game. The believers were ordered by Him to eat good things and to be thankful to Him. In this saying, Allah distinguishes between addressing people in an absolute sense and addressing the believers specifically. Allah says: "Oh, you people! Eat from what is on earth, lawful, and good; and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan, for he is to you an avowed enemy. For he commands you to do what is evil and shameful, and that you should say of Allah that of which you have no knowledge. When it is said to them: 'follow what Allah reveals,' they say: 'No! we shall follow the ways of our fathers.' What! Even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance?" (2:168–70). These verses indicate that Allah permits people to eat what is on earth on two conditions: if the food is good and if it is lawful. Then, He adds: "Oh, you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship. He has only forbidden you maytah, *a dead animal,* and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name has been invoked besides that of Allah . . ." (2:172–73).[15] Allah makes it permissible for the believers to eat the good things and does not place a condition on disbandment. Nothing was prohibited except what is specified above. Thus, other than what has been specifically prohibited, the believers are permitted to eat

[15] The word al-maytah, which is translated as *dead meat,* refers to the meat of an animal that dies by itself. The meat which it is lawful to eat in Islam, is killed while pronouncing the takbīr, *Allahu Akbar*. Of course, this does not apply to some creatures of the sea, such as fish.

everything else. Even though He did not specify what is permissible in His words, it falls in the realm of excuse [to eat what they desire]. As reported in the ḥadith of Salmān: "The permissible is what Allah makes permissible in His Book, the prohibited is what Allah prohibits in His Book, and what He is silent about is what He places in the realm of excuse." This ḥadith is reported as mawqūf, and may be marfūʿ.

Furthermore, it is reported by Abu Thaʿlabah[16] from the Prophet (pbuh): "Indeed Allah decrees certain obligations, so do not neglect them; stipulates certain limits, so do not go beyond them; and makes sacred ordinances, so do not violate them. However, Allah is silent about certain things as a mercy for you, but He does not forget, so do not go searching for them."

Allah, the Exalted, also says: "Say: I find not in what is revealed to me any [meat] prohibited to be eaten by anyone except that of the dead animal [maytah] . . ." (6:145). What is not specified here is not negated by prohibition. Consequently, what is not spoken about as prohibited, is excused. Permission needs to be through the words [of Allah]; thus he says in the Sūrat al Māʾdah, *Chapter of The Table*, which was revealed thereafter: "They ask you [Oh Muḥammad] what is lawful for them [as food]. Say: lawful to you [are all] things good and pure; and what you have taught your trained hunting animals [to catch] in the manner directed to you by Allah. Eat what they catch for you, but pronounce the name of Allah over it; and fear Allah, for Allah is swift in taking account. " (5:4). And He says: "This day [all] good things are made lawful for you. The food of the people of the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them . . ." (5:5). So on the day of the revelation of these verses, the good things to eat became permissible for them. Before that, nothing was prohibited.

The Prophet (pbuh) prohibited eating the meat of predatory animals with canine teeth, and of birds with claws. This is not invalidation of the Book. It is not simply because the Book did not specifically permit this but because it is silent about prohibiting it. So the start of the prohibition is also the start of its legislation. For this reason, the Prophet (pbuh) said it in a ḥadith that is reported in different

[16] Abu Thaʿlabah (?–75 A.H.) was a transmitter of ḥadith and a Companion of the Prophet. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 64.]

versions. One of the versions is the ḥadith reported by Abu Rāfiʿ,[17] Abu Thaʿlabah, Abu Hurayrah, and others. The Prophet said: "I could see one of you sitting with pride on his comfortable chair receiving my commands concerning what is prohibited and what is allowed." Then he continued: "The Qurʾān stands as [a judge] between us. Whatever we find in it is permissible, we accept it; and whatever we find in it is prohibited, we forbid it. Indeed I am the one who received the Book, along with it, and the like of it [wisdom]." In another version of this ḥadith the Prophet said: "Indeed it [wisdom] is like the Qurʾān and even provides more details, indeed I prohibit [eating] the flesh of predatory animals with canine teeth." The Prophet made it clear that Allah revealed to him a different kind of revelation. It is the Ḥikmah, *the Wisdom,* which is different from the Book. Allah revealed to him [the Prophet] what is prohibited through this revelation, and the Prophet informed the people of this prohibition. This is not an abrogation of the Book since the Book did not permit this to begin with, but only made the good things permissible to eat. The prohibited [items] are not considered among the good things to eat. Allah says: "Oh, you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you . . ." (2:172). The connotation of this verse is not in the realm of an absolute sense, however Allah does not make the good things permissible or prohibited. It is simply left in the domain of the ʿafw, *excuse.* As for the unbelievers, Allah does not allow, permit, prohibit, or even excuse anything for them to eat or not to eat. He says: "Oh, you people! Eat from what is lawful and good on earth . . ." (2:168). The only condition is that they eat lawful food—that which is permitted by Allah and His Messenger. Allah gives permission regarding eating only to the believers; thus He does not give them permission unless they believe. Consequently, their possessions do not belong to them legally. To own something legally one must have the ability and permission of the Prophet (pbuh), and he did not grant them the permission to deal freely with their possessions. This permission comes only under one condition: Iman. Thus, their possessions can be claimed by anybody. Consequently, when a group conquers another group by force, it is legal in their religion to claim their possessions and take them from them. The new owners then have the same claim on the possessions. On the other hand, if the Muslims claim the property and

[17] Abu Rābiʿ (?–40 A.H.) was a Companion of the Prophet and a transmitter of ḥadith. He was also a source of information for the other Companions, such as ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAbbās, who used to ask him about the deeds and the sayings of the Prophet with regard to certain events and occasions. [M. M. Azami, p. 39.]

capture it by force, it becomes legally theirs because Allah makes the spoils permissible for them and not others. They also allow their captives to be bought from each other because this falls in the category of claiming permissible things. Thus, Allah calls what is claimed of their possessions by the Muslims fayʾ, *booty,* because He grants booty to those who deserve it (i.e. He returns it to the believers who worship Him and seek His sustenance through worship). Allah creates creatures in order to worship Him and creates this sustenance for them to help them to worship Him. In addition to fayʾ, the word ghanīmah may also be used to mean *booty.* As the Prophet (pbuh) said with regard to the battle of Ḥunayn: "For me only one-fifth of the booty that Allah gave you, and even the one-fifth, will be returned to you." Allah says: "What Allah has bestowed on His Messenger from them for this you made no expedition with any horses or riding camels . . ." (59:6).The word fayʾ, as understood by the religious scholars, means: what has been taken from the property of the unbelievers without ʾījāf, *engaging,* horses or riding camels. The word ʾījāf is used in the sense of making some kind of movement.

However, if a believer does what is lawful because he is in need of doing it, as well as not wanting to commit evil, he will be rewarded for it. This is illustrated in the Prophet's saying: "Allah will reward you for your sexual practice with your wives." When his Companions heard this they asked with astonishment: "Are we even rewarded for fulfilling our sexual desires?" "Yes," replied the Prophet. "Do you not know that if you engaged in sex illegally, you would be punished for it? Therefore, you will be rewarded if you engage in it legally" (recorded by Muslim). Similar to this is the saying of Ibn ʿUmar from the Prophet (pbuh): "Allah loves for the acts He has made lawful to be practiced and hates to be disobeyed" (recorded by Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], Ibn Khuzaymah[17] in his *Ṣaḥīh,* and others). The Prophet said that Allah loves His decisions to be carried out. For permissible acts are made lawful in order to help the believers in the worship of Allah. Thus, Allah loves the acts He permits to be practiced, for a generous one likes his charity to be accepted. As the Prophet (pbuh) said [about shortening prayer from four to two rakʿahs]: "Allah granted you charity, so accept His charity." For through this charity, His worship and obedience are complete. As for unnecessary words and actions of a person, these are recorded as against, not for him, as indicated in the

[17] Ibn Khuzaymah (?–311 A.H.) was a scholar and a transmitter of ḥadith. [M. M. Azami, pp. 302–3.]

Prophet's (pbuh) saying: "All the sayings of the son of Adam are recorded against rather than for him, except commanding good or forbidding evil or remembering Allah."

It is reported in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that the Prophet (pbuh) also said: "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day let him either say that which is good, or keep silent." That is, he commanded the believer either to utter good words or to keep silent. It follows that to speak good is better than to keep silent, which in turn is better than to speak evil. For Allah says: "Not a word does one utter but there is with him a vigilant guardian" (50:18).

Indeed, interpreters have differed about the two guardians' record. For example, Mujāhid and others said that these guardians make a complete record of every word, thought, and act, even a moan when one is sick. ʿIkrimah[18] said that these guardians record what one is rewarded or punished for. However, the Qurʾān indicates that the guardian makes a complete record of words, thoughts, and actions. Allah says: "Not a word does he utter . . . ," which means that every single word spoken is recorded by the guardian. Moreover, since he is rewarded or punished for a given statement, then this implies that he should know what he is rewarded or punished for, and in order to affirm the knowledge [of the guardian], he should record it. Furthermore, he is commanded either to utter good words or to keep silent. Thus, if he prefers to speak what he is commanded or to keep silent about his statement, this will be recorded against him. For the Prophet (pbuh) said: "For the goodness of one's Islam is not to intrude in others' affairs." Thus, if he speaks about what does not concern him, the goodness of his Islam decreases. For his saying is recorded against him. However, this does not necessarily mean that he will go to Hell. It only means that his rank is reduced. For Allah says: ". . . It [the soul] gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns . . ." (2:286). Hence, whatever one does is recorded for him; otherwise it will be recorded against him and his rank will be reduced if the act does not deserve punishment. By nature, the soul is always in a state of flux; it is not static. However, Allah forgives the believers if their intention to speak evil is not carried out or acted upon. When they do act upon it, it enters into the realm of command and denial since Allah made all unlawful acts undesirable to the believers. Also,

[18] ʿIkrimah (25–105 A.H.) was famous for his commentary on the Qurʾān and was a transmitter of ḥadith. [M. M. Azami, p. 66.]

he endeared to them Iman, which entails adhering to all obedient acts unless they are being opposed by the consensus of all the people. The Murji'ites do not question that Iman, which is in the heart, leads to and necessitates an act of obedience, and that obedience is one of its fruits and results. However, they do question whether Iman necessitates acts of obedience. For indeed, if it [Iman] calls for acts of obedience, there will be a muʿāriḍ, *adversary,* from the soul and from Satan. Then if this adversary made it [Iman] undesirable to the believers, the need for the actual obedience will consequently be safe from this adversary.

When believers hate all kinds of evil, nothing is left over except what is good or lawful. The latter is only made legitimate for believers in order to help them worship Allah; for He does not make lawful what enables one to disbelieve, to commit sins, or to reject belief. An illustration is the Prophet's (pbuh) putting a curse on the one who presses wine, on the one for whom it is pressed, as well as on the one who drinks it. Although the presser squeezes grapes into juice that is lawful to drink and may be of benefit to one's health, it is only when he intends to make the juice into wine that he helps the drinker disobey Allah. The Prophet put a curse on him because Allah neither makes it lawful to aid someone who rejects belief in his disobedience nor does He make lawful anything that helps one to reject belief. Indeed, nothing is made lawful unless it helps in doing good. And it can be inferred that not doing evil means that only good deeds are done. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "People who strive in this life are of two types. The first one includes those who sacrifice their souls to attain salvation, whereas the second type includes those who sacrifice to destroy themselves. Hence, he who is a believer loves good and hates evil; therefore, he is pleased by doing good and displeased by doing evil. However, if he does not do so, he lacks true belief."

A believer may commit an evil act but later repent or perform good deeds to erase it; or if a misfortune befalls him, that may erase it also. However, he must feel hatred for it [evil], in order for Allah to redeem him. For Allah endears belief to believers and He makes unbelief, sin, and rebellion hateful to them. Hence, whoever does not have hatred for these three things is not among the believers. However, Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr [al-Marwazī] said: " Al-fāsiq, *the sinner,* hates them as an act of belief." In response to this it is stated that what is intended is that he believed that his religion prohibited them and he loved his religion and these are simply from among its totality; however, if he still disliked them, even when

he liked his religion in its totality and there was no hate in his heart for them, he would be deprived from Iman in the same amount, as indicated in the Prophet's saying: "He who among you sees an evil act should change it by his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue, and if he is not able to do that, then he should abhor it from his heart; and that is the weakest sort of belief."

In another ḥadith (recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*) the Prophet (pbuh) said: "He who struggles against them with his hand is a believer, and he who struggles against them with his tongue is a believer, and he who struggles against them with his heart is a believer, and beyond that there is no belief even to the extent of the weight of a mustard seed."

Consequently, when one's heart does not hate what Allah hates, then he does not have the true belief for which he can be rewarded. His saying "and beyond that there is no belief," in the ḥadith above means absolute belief. That is, beyond these three kinds of struggle there is no absolute belief, even to the extent of the weight of a mustard seed. It also means that this is the end point of belief and no belief is beyond it. However, it is worthy of note that this ḥadith does not mean that whoever does not struggle against unbelievers with his hand, tongue, or heart, no longer has belief. Thus the words of the above ḥadith refer to the first meaning.

Chapter Three

The Meanings of the Terms Unbelief, Hypocrisy and Polytheism

In this chapter the discussion is focused on the meaning of the words kufr, *unbelief*, and nifāq, *hypocrisy*. When the word "unbelief" is cited [in the Qur'ān and Sunnah] by itself, with regard to the warning concerning the Hereafter, it implies hypocrisy, as indicated in the following verses of the Qur'ān. Allah says: ". . . If anyone rejects belief, fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of the losers" (5:5); and ". . . Anyone who disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgement, has gone far, far astray" (4:136); and "None shall burn therein but those most unfortunate ones who give the lie to truth and turn their backs" (92:15–16); and ". . . Every time a group is cast therein, its keepers will ask: 'Did no warner come to you?' They will say: 'Yes, indeed, someone did come to warn us, but we rejected him and said: Allah never sent down anything [of revelation]; you are in great error'" (67:8–9); and "The unbelievers will be led to Hell in a crowd: Until they arrive there, its gates will be opened and its Keepers will say: 'Did Messengers not come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing to you the Signs of your Lord, and warning you of the meeting of this day of yours?' Their answer will be: 'Yes, but the word of Punishment for the unbelievers is fulfilled!' It will be said to them: 'Enter the gates of Hell, to dwell therein: And evil is [this] abode of the arrogant!'" (39:71–72); and "And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah or rejects the truth when it reaches him? Is there not a home in Hell for the unbelievers?" (29:68); and "But whosoever turns away from My Message, indeed for him life is narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment. He will say: 'Oh my Lord! Why have You raised me up blind, while I had sight [before]?' [Allah] will say: 'Thus did you, when Our Signs came unto you, and you disregarded them: so will you, this day, be disregarded. And thus do

We recompense him who transgresses beyond bounds and does not believe in the Signs of his Lord: and the penalty of the Hereafter is far more grievous and more enduring'" (20:124–27); and "Those who reject [truth] among the people of the Book and among the polytheists will be in Hellfire, to dwell therein [forever]. They are the worst of creatures" (98:6). There are many other verses in the Qur'ān in which unbelief is cited by itself.

In the Qur'ānic verses mentioned above, the word "unbelief" implies both hypocrisy, wherein a hypocrite [inwardly] rejects belief and [outwardly] pretends to behave as a Muslim; and unbelief, wherein an unbeliever rejects belief, openly and explicitly. In His Book, Allah mentions that in the Hereafter, hypocrites will be consigned to the lowest level of Hellfire. In some verses of the Qur'ān, the word "unbelief" is associated with the word "hypocrisy." For example, in the first section of Sūrat al-Baqarah, *the Chapter of the Cow*, Allah describes the traits of the believers in four verses, of the unbelievers in two verses, and of hypocrites in ten verses. Allah says: ". . . For Allah will collect the hypocrites and the unbelievers, all in Hell" (4:140); and "On the day when the hypocrites, men and women, will say to the believers: 'Wait for us! Let us borrow [a light] from your Light!' It will be said: 'Turn back to your rear! Then seek a light [where you can]!' So a wall will be put up between them, with a gate therein. Inside it will be mercy, and outside will be torment. [The hypocrites] will call the believers: 'Were we not with you?' The believers will reply: 'Yes! but you led yourself into temptations; you doubted [in belief]; and you were deceived by false desires, until the Command of Allah came to pass. And the chief deceiver [Satan] deceived you with respect to Allah. This day no ransom shall be accepted of you, nor of those who disbelieved Allah. Your abode is the Fire: that is the proper place to claim you: and an evil refuge it is!'" (57:13–15);[1] and "Oh, Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be harsh against them . . ." (9:73); and "Do you not see what the hypocrites say to their unbelieving brethren . . ." (59:11).

The meaning of the word al-mushrikūn, *the polytheists,* may be associated only with the People of the Book, or may be associated with the five communities, as

[1] The author did not cite the complete text of these three verses. He started with half of the first verse, said it was to be continued, and then cited the last verse. The translators felt that it is more convenient for the reader to give the full text of all three verses.

indicated in the saying of Allah, the Exalted: "Those who believe [in the Qur'ān], those who follow the Jewish [scriptures], and the Sabians, Christians, Magians, and Polytheists, Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgement: For Allah is witness of all things" (22:17). The word, polytheists, may also be associated with the People of the Book, as indicated in the following verses of the Qur'ān. Allah says: "Those who disbelieve among the People of the Book and among the polytheists, were not going to depart [from their ways] until there should come to them Clear Evidence" (98:1); and "Indeed, those who disbelieve among the People of the Book and among the polytheists, will be in Hellfire, to dwell therein [forever]. They are the worst of creatures" (98:6); and "... And say [Oh, Muḥammad] to the people of the Book and to those who are illiterate: 'Do you [also] submit yourselves?' If they do, they are in right guidance, but if they turn back, then your duty is to convey the Message ..." (3:20); There are only the People of the Book and al-ummiyyūn, *the illiterate people,* who are to be found after the mission of the Prophet (pbuh). Every community not given a Book is illiterate; like the illiterate Arabs, Khazar[2], Slavs, Indians, al-Sūdān, *the Black Africans,* and other communities who do not have a Book. All these are illiterate, and the Messenger was sent to them as well as he was sent to the illiterate among the Arabs.

Allah says: ". . . [Oh, Muḥammad!] Say to those who received the Book ..."(3:20). Here he is addressing those people who were present at this time. This event took place after the abrogation of certain verses of the Qur'ān, which confirms that the people who are addressed in the above-mentioned verse are the Jews and the Christians. The word, polytheists, therefore, is not restricted only to those who adhered to this concept before abrogation. It also includes their offspring and the offspring of others who are like them. They are all considered unbelievers. Thus Allah addressed them as those who received the Book when He says: "... [Oh, Muḥammad!] Say to those who received the Book ..." (3:20). The address is directed to those to whom the Message was conveyed among the living and certainly not to those who were dead. This is indicated in His saying: "The food of those who received the Book is lawful to you ..."(5:5). Religious scholars

[2] Khazar, a nomadic people in the Southern Russian Steppes who flourished in the early Islamic period. [*E.I.*2, vol. 4, p.1172.]

such as Mālik[3] and Abu Ḥanifah[4] and all the recorded answers of Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] are in agreement on this matter. However, Aḥmad advanced an opinion concerning the Christian tribe of Taghlub. In one report it is stated that it is lawful to marry their women and eat their meat, which is also the opinion of the Companions. The other report states that it is not lawful, which follows the opinion of ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, may Allah be pleased with him. This is not because of their kinship but because they desired to stay with the ranks of the People of the Book simply because they liked to drink wine and perform similar acts. It was reported, on behalf of ʿAṭāʾ, that some of the Successors thought it was because of kinship. Such thinking was supported by al-Shāfiʿī and by some of the followers of Aḥmad. Those who supported this idea discussed it in detail. This is especially true among mixed marriages in which one of the parents comes from the People of the Book. The claim that this line of thinking is supported by Aḥmad and his followers is completely wrong. He did not base his judgment at all on kinship.

The word al-mushrikūn, *the polytheists,* occurs alone as in the following Qurʾānic verse. Allah says: "Do not marry the polytheists [women] until they believe . . ."(2:221). Does this matter include and make reference to the People of the Book? Religious scholars among the pious ancestors and later scholars advanced two different statements in this regard. And those who generalize from among them said: "It is muḥakkamah," *prejudged.* Among those who supported this position was Ibn ʿUmar. The majority of the Muslims advocated the position to give permission to marry the women from among the People of the Book, as is mentioned in the above verse of the Qurʾān, entitled al-Māʾidah, *The Table.* The revelation of this verse occurred at a later time. There are some from among them who said, with regard to this verse: "The prohibition of the marriage of the women from among the People of the Book was abrogated." However, there are some

[3] Mālik ibn Anas, Abu ʿAbd Allah (?–179 A.H.), was a well-known jurist and the founder of the Mālikī School of Law that is named after him. He was frequently referred to as the Imām of al-Madīnah. His famous work of ḥadith, *Kitab al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* ,is considered the earliest surviving book on ḥadith. [*E.I.* 2, vol. 6, pp. 262–65 and *al-Fihrist,* vol. 2, p. 1037.]

[4] Abu Ḥanīfah, al-Nuʿmān ibn Thābit (?–150 A.H.), was a famous jurist who founded the Ḥanafī School of Law that is named after him. He died in Baghdād and was buried there. Both the quarter and the mausoleum where he is buried are even today called al-Aʿẓamiyyah (i.e., al-Imām al-Aʿẓam). [*E.I.* 2, vol. 1, p. 23 and *al-Fihrist*, vol. 2, p. 994.]

from among them who said: "What is meant by this is specific and no generalization is intended by it." Allah, the Exalted, reveals, after the peace covenant of al-Ḥudaybiyyah: ". . . Likewise, hold not the disbelieving women as wives . . ." (60:10). What is meant by this is that Allah forbids Muslims to stay married to unbelieving women. And most people at that time were married to either polytheists or idol-worshiping women. Therefore, women from the People of the Book were not included.

Chapter Four

The Meanings of the Terms the Righteous, the Witness and the Sincere

Each of the following words—al-ṣāliḥ, *the righteous one*, al-shahīd, *the witness*, and al-ṣiddīq, *the sincere one*—may be cited [in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah] separately to refer to the Prophets. Allah says about al-Khalīl [i.e., the Prophet Abraham]: "... We granted him his reward in this life; and he is in the Hereafter [in the company] of the righteous ones" (29:27); and "... We gave him [Abraham] good in this world, and he will be, in the Hereafter, in the ranks of the righteous ones" (16:122). Al-Khalīl said: "Oh, my Lord! Bestow wisdom on me, and join me with the righteous ones" (26:83). Yūsuf [Joseph] said: "... [Oh, Allah] Let me die as a Muslim and unite me with the righteous ones" (12:101). Sulaymān [Solomon] said: "... And admit me, by Your grace, to the ranks of Your righteous ones" (27:19). The Prophet (pbuh) spoke to people who prayed reciting: "Peace be upon Allah before His Servants, peace be upon the Angel Gabriel, peace be upon the Angel Mīkā'īl [Michael], and peace be upon so and so." The Messenger of Allah said to us one day: "Indeed Allah is Himself Peace. When any one of you sits during the prayers, he should say: 'All services rendered by words, by acts of worship, and all good things are due to Allah.' Peace be upon you, Oh, Prophet, and Allah's mercy and blessings. Peace be upon us and upon Allah's righteous servants, for when he says this it reaches every righteous servant in Heaven and on earth" (as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*).

The word, righteous, may be associated with other terms. Allah says: "... Whosoever obeys Allah and the Messenger are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah, of the Prophets, the sincere ones, the witness, and the righteous ones" (4:69). Al-Zajjāj and others said: "The righteous one is he who fulfills the rights of Allah and His Servants." In fact, the word, righteous, means

the opposite of the word al-fāsid, *the corrupt.* Accordingly, when the word, righteous, is used in an absolute sense it means one who works and stays righteous without being corrupted. That is, he is one whose inward works and sayings correspond exactly to his outward obedience to Allah. On this basis, righteous, refers to the Prophets and those who are below them. In the verse mentioned above (4:69), the words, the righteous ones, were used in conjunction with the phrase, the Prophets, who in turn are described in different verses of the Qur'ān as being righteous ones. Allah says: "Mentioned in the Book is the story of Abraham: He was a sincere man, a Prophet" (19:41) and "Also mentioned in the Book is the case of Idrīs: He was a sincere man, a Prophet" (19:56).

The word al-shahīd, *witness*, [in the same verse] is associated with the words "the sincere ones" and "the righteous ones." Allah says: ". . . The Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward; and a just decision pronounced between them" (39:69). The word, witness, is attached to the people, and described the community as a whole as in Allah's saying: "Thus We made of you a community justly balanced that you may be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger will be a witness upon you . . ." (2:143). Such a witness is tied to the witness among the people and is like the witness mentioned in Allah's saying: "Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it? . . ." (24:13) and ". . . And get two witnesses of your own men . . ." (2:282). In these two verses the connotation of the meaning of the word, witness, is not intended to be the absolute meaning but rather as in Allah's saying: ". . . [Allah] may choose witnesses from among you . . ." (3:140).

Chapter Five

The Meanings of the Terms Disobedience, Sin and Unbelief

In this chapter the focus will be on explaining the terms al-maʿṣiyyah, *disobedience,* al-fusūq, *sin,* and al-kufr, *unbelief.* If the word, disobedience, is used in an absolute sense with reference to Allah and His Messenger, then unbelief and sin are implied, as indicated in the words of Allah. Allah says: ". . . For any that disobey Allah and His Messenger, for them is Hellfire; they shall dwell therein forever" (72:23) and: "Such were the people of ʿĀd; they rejected the Signs of their Lord, disobeyed His Messengers and followed the command of every powerful, obstinate transgressor" (11:59). This verse generalizes the use of the term, disobedience, beyond that of the people of ʿĀd to all Messengers, although they disobeyed only the Prophet Hūd. This is because they rejected the idea that Allah would send down any Messenger as indicated in this verse. Allah says: ". . . But we rejected him and said: 'Allah never sent down any (Message)'" (67:9). Parallel to this sort of disobedience is that of the one who gives the lie to truth and turns away, as indicated in Allah's saying: "None shall reach it but those most unfortunate ones who give the lie to truth and turn their backs" (92:15–16). Therefore, he is the one who gives the lie to the truth of Allah's sending down Messengers and who turns away from obeying Allah. For people should believe in what the Messengers have brought to them, and obey their commands. Similarly, Allah says about Pharaoh: "But he rejected it and disobeyed (guidance)" (79:21). About the unbeliever Allah says: "So he neither believed nor did he pray! But on the contrary, he rejected truth and turned away!" (75:31–32). That is, an unbeliever gave the lie to the truth of sending down the Messengers and turned away from obedience to Allah. By contrast, Iman is believing in what the Messengers have brought and obeying their commands. Allah says: ". . . Even as

We sent a Messenger to Pharaoh, Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger . . ." (73:15–16).

The expression al-tawalī, *turning away (from obedience),* is mentioned in different verses of the Qur'ān. For example, Allah says: ". . . You shall be summoned [to fight] against a people given to vehement war; then shall you fight, or they shall submit. Then if you show obedience, Allah will grant you a goodly reward, but if you turn back, as you did before, He will punish you with a grievous penalty" (48:16). In many verses of the Qur'ān, Allah rebukes those who turn away from obedience, thus indicating that obeying Allah and His Messenger, as well as admonishing those who turn away from obedience, are obligations. Thus absolute command requires complete obedience. In His saying: "But Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger . . ." (73:16);[1] Allah admonishes people who turn away from His obedience, regardless of the kind of disobedience they commit. Indeed, it is said that the eternal penalty mentioned in the Qur'ān is limited to warning unbelievers who commit certain kinds of disobedience. Allah says: "If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein forever, the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him" (4:93). Regarding transgressing Allah's limits by deviating from what He says about dividing inheritance [Allah says]: "He who disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein; and shall have a humiliating punishment" (4:14). The disobedience expressed in this verse is conditioned in a particular sense to those who disobey and transgress Allah's limits. Allah also says: ". . . Thus did Adam disobey His Lord, and allow himself to be seduced" (20:121). This is also a particular kind of disobedience. Allah says: ". . . until your courage failed you and you disagreed about the order, and disobeyed after He showed you [the spoils] which you love . . ." (3:152). Disobedience in this verse makes reference to a specific event which is the disobedience of al-rumāt, *marksmen,* against the orders of the Prophet (pbuh). The Prophet ordered them to hold their own positions even when they saw that the Muslims were victorious. Thus, some of them disobeyed the order of their leader and they were attracted by the prospect of the spoils. Allah also says: ". . . and He has made hateful to you unbelief, sin, and rebellion . . ." (49:7). These three attributes are given in sequence. Allah also says: ". . . [that believing women] will

[1] The reference to this verse is incorrect in sūrat al-Nisā', Chapter 4, Verse 92 in MI.2. However, the correct reference is as indicated above.

not disobey you in any just matter . . ." (60:12). Disobedience in this verse has a specific connotation; it is interpreted to mean the loud wailing of women. Ibn ʿAbbās as well as Zayd Ibn Aslam[2] relate on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh): "Do not wail loudly, do not beat your cheeks, do not uncover your hair, and do not tear your clothes [in grief]." Others, such as Abu Sulaymān al-Dimashqī, said: "Disobeying Allah in any just matter means disobeying Him in all of what he commands [i.e., Islamic legislation and guidelines]." Accordingly, believing women do not disobey the Messenger in any just matters. Disobedience to him cannot be ignored in any just matter, as he does not command evil. This is an indication that being obedient to those of authority requires kindness, as exemplified in the following ḥadith: "Obedience is in kindness." Similar to this is the saying of Allah: ". . . Obey Allah and the Messenger when He calls you to that to which you will give your life . . ." (8:24). Allah calls you only, for there is no call except for that purpose and no command without kindness, as in the saying of Allah: ". . . Force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity . . ." (24:33). However, if they do not desire chastity, the forcing is negated. This makes it clear that the judgment is suitable in this regard. Allah also says: "If anyone invokes any other god besides Allah, he has no authority thereof and his reckoning is only with his Lord. Lo! the unbelievers will not be successful" (23:117) and: ". . . And they slay His Messengers without cause . . ." (2:61). The specifications indicated in all the above citations are used simply for clarification and for no other purpose. Grammarians state that definite attributes are used for the purposes of clarification and specification, whereas indefinite attributes are used for specification only. This means that definite attributes [or adjectives] do not need any specification, as in Allah's saying: "Praise the name of your Lord the Most High who created and has given order and proportion" (87:1–2). He also says: "And those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own Scriptures, in the Torah, and the Gospel . . ." (7:157); and: "Praise be to Allah! Lord of the Worlds, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful" (1:1–2). Attributes of the indefinite kind, when specified, are simply used for the purpose of clarification. In the following verse the word "rebellion" is being used in conjunction with the words "unbelief" and "sin," as in His saying: ". . . Allah has made hateful to you unbelief, sin, and rebellion . . ." (49:7). In conclusion, it is known that the sinner is also rebellious.

[2] Zayd ibn Aslam, Abu Usāmah (?–136 A.H.), was the author of an early commentary on the Qur'ān and was also a transmitter of ḥadith. [*al-Fihrist*, vol. 1, p. 75 and vol. 2, p. 1132.]

Chapter Six

Wrong: Its Kinds and Meaning

Self-wrong consists of wronging one's self. When used in an absolute sense, this includes all sins, which in turn are considered as wronging one's self. Allah says: "These are some of the stories of towns [communities] which We relate to you [Oh, Muḥammad]: Of them some are standing, and some have been destroyed. We did not wrong them, but they did wrong themselves; and their gods on whom they call beside Allah did not profit them when there came the Command of your Lord, nor did they add anything [to their lot] but destruction!" (11:100–101). Allah also says: "And remember Moses said to his people: 'Oh, my people! You have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf: so turn [in repentance] to your Maker . . .'" (2:54); and He says on killing one's self: "Oh, my Lord! I have indeed wronged myself! Do You then forgive me? . . ." (28:16). Balqīs said: ". . . Oh, my Lord! I have indeed wronged myself: I do [now] submit [in Islam], with Solomon, to the Lord of the Worlds" (27:44). Adam (pbuh) said: ". . . Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves: If You will not forgive us and bestow Your Mercy upon us, we shall certainly be among the losers" (7:23). The concept of wrong may be joined to some [but not all] sins, as Allah, the Exalted, says: "And those who, when they do an evil thing or wrong themselves . . ." (3:135); and "And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterward seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah readily forgiving, Most Merciful" (4:110).

As for the meaning of the term al-ẓulm, *unrestricted wrong,* when used in an absolute sense, it includes unbelief plus all other sins. Allah says: "Gather those who wronged, along with their wives and the things they worshiped, besides Allah, and lead them to the Way to the [fierce] Fire! But stop them, for they must be asked: What is the matter with you that you do not help each other?" (37:22–25). In this verse, the term, their wives, has the following interpretations:

According to ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb it means, their match, or their resemblers. To Ibn ʿAbbās, Qatādah, and al-Kalbī it means: "that whoever does what they do"—that is, the people of wine will be brought up with the people of wine, and the people of adultery with the people of adultery. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk and Muqātil state that it means "their demonic mates"—that is, every unbeliever will be brought up, chained to his own demon. The same applies to Allah's saying: "And when the souls are joined with their bodies" (81:7). ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "The unchaste with the unchaste, and the righteous with the righteous." Ibn ʿAbbās said: "When people become three pairs." Al-Ḥassan and Qatādah said: "The truth is everyone is matched with his people—that is, the Jew with the Jews, and the Christian with the Christians." Al-Rabīʿ Ibn Khuthaym[1] said: "A man is cast together with his mate, as it was recorded in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* from the Prophet (pbuh). When he was asked: Why does a man like some people but does not follow them?" the Prophet answered: "A man is joined to whomever he likes." He [the Prophet] also said: "Souls of the same type flock together and those of opposite types do not." He further said: "A man follows the path of his friend, so one has to take care in choosing his friends."

The mate of a thing is its match. The word al-ṣanf, *category*,[2] is also called "pair" due to the similarity of its mates, Allah says: ". . . Noble things of every pair We have produced therein" (26:7) and "And everything We have created is in pairs: that you may reflect" (51:49). Indeed, different interpreters have explained the word "pairs" as referring to two different categories. Examples are: sky and earth, sun and moon, night and day, land and sea, plain and mountain, winter and summer, jinns and humans, unbelief and the faith, happiness and misery, truth and falsehood, male and female, light and dark, sweet and bitter; and other such pairs. The second part of the last verse, namely, "that you may reflect," means that you may understand that He who creates the pairs is One. However, the previously mentioned verse, 'Gather those who wronged, along with their wives . . .' does not mean that every husband will be joined with his wife. For a righteous wife may have an unchaste or even an unbelieving husband, as in the case of Pharaoh's wife. A righteous husband may likewise have an unchaste or even an unbelieving wife,

[1] Al-Rabīʿ ibn Khuthaym, Abu Yazīd (?–63 A.H.), was a scholar of and transmitter of ḥadith. [*Kitāb al-Iman* MZ, p. 80 and *al-Fihrist*, vol. 2, p. 1081.]

[2] In the MKZ and MI.2 editions, the word al-niṣf, *half*, is used. However, in MKH the word is al-ṣanf.

as in the case of the wives of Noah and Lot. However, if a wife happens to be of her husband's religion, then they will be included in the general category of partners. That is why al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī said: "The word 'wives' mentioned in the verse refers only to the unbelieving wives." There is no doubt that this verse refers to the unbelievers, as the context of the verse indicates: The fornicators will be joined with the fornicators and the people of wine will be joined with the people of wine. The same is true of the following narration: "On the Day of Judgement, it will be said: Where are the wrongdoers and their assistants [i.e., those who resemble them]? They will be joined together in coffins of fire and then they will be cast into Hell." Some interpreters believe that the term 'wrongdoer's assistants' refers to those who provide any kind of help to wrongdoers, even if he gives them an ink pot or sharpens a pencil for them. Others used to say that it refers to their [the wrongdoers'] wives, who wash their clothes that is, their helpers are their mates, as suggested in the verse. It is clear that whoever helps a good cause becomes one of the good people and whoever helps a bad cause becomes one of the bad people. For Allah says: "Whoever intercedes in a good cause becomes a partner therein; and whoever recommends and helps an evil cause, shares in its burden . . ." (4:85). In this verse, the person who "intercedes and helps a good cause" refers to one who helps another person and becomes an intercessor after he has been alone. Hence, 'good cause' is interpreted by Ibn Jarīr and Abu Sulaymān as helping the believers to fight against unbelievers, and 'bad cause' as helping unbelievers to fight against the believers. However, al-Ḥassan, Mujāhid, Qatādah, and Ibn Zayd interpret the term 'good cause' as helping another person, either by doing him a favor or by rescuing him from a calamity. Thus, the good cause is helping [another] to do good, which Allah and His Messenger approve, benefitting whoever deserves benefit and rescuing from evil whoever deserves to be rescued. On the other hand, the bad cause is helping someone to do what Allah and His Messenger hate, such as oppressing others or preventing them from receiving the charity that they deserve. Other interpreters explain the term 'good cause' to mean praying for the believers, and the bad cause means cursing them; or they interpret the good cause as meaning reconciliation between two people. Thus, the helper is the mate of the one who seeks help; for a helper either helps the help seeker for a good cause or for a bad cause. If one went to the Prophet (pbuh) seeking help, he [the Prophet] used to tell his Companions: "Help and recommend a good cause in order to be rewarded by Allah. The sayings of His Prophet are fulfilled in accordance with Allah's wish."

The verse "Gather those who wronged and the things they worshiped," although it refers to a wrongdoer who wrongs [self and others] by being an unbeliever, and refers to minor sins as well. The second part of the verse, "and the things they worshiped," is illustrated in the many sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) recorded in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. For example, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Condemn the dinār's slave, condemn the dirham's slave, condemn the slave of velvet, condemn the slave of silk; he is condemned and suffers a relapse, and if a thorn pricks him, may Allah not let it come out [of his body], even with the help of a burin." The Prophet also said: "Any property owner who does not give zakah [would be spared punishment] but his property would be made like a bald-headed poisonous male snake that would grab the owner's cheek and would say to him: I am your property, I am your treasure." In another version of this ḥadīth: "On the Day of Judgement his property will appear to him as a poisonous snake. He will flee from it, but it will follow him until it wraps itself around his neck." Then the Prophet (pbuh) recited this verse: ". . . On the Day of Judgement the things which they covetously withheld will be tied tightly around their necks . . ." (3:180). In another narration of this ḥadīth: "His property on the Day of Judgement will appear to him like a bald-headed poisonous male snake that will follow him wherever he goes and he will flee from it and the snake will say: 'this is your property, which you did not spend in the cause of Allah.' When he tries to escape from the snake, he puts his hand in the snake's mouth and the male snake gnaws his hand." In another version: "The snake will continue to chase him and he will put his hand in the snake's mouth and the snake will gnaw it and then the snake will consume all of his body." Allah, the Exalted, says in another verse: ". . . And there are those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah. Announce to them [Oh, Muḥammad] a painful punishment. On the day when it [the hoarded property] will be heated in the fire of Hell, so their foreheads, flanks, and backs will be branded by it. This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourself, now taste what you hoarded" (9:34–35).

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is related that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "If any owner of property does not give zakah, his property will be heated in the fire of Hell and it will be made into plates that burn his sides and his forehead; then Allah will pronounce judgement among His servants during a day that lasts for fifty thousand years, as you people count them. He [the property owner] will then see his path, leading either to Paradise or to Hell." In the ḥadīth of Abu Dharr he said: "Inform those

who hoard wealth that a ḍarf, *heated stone,* that has been heated in Hellfire, will be placed on the nipples of their breasts until it pierces [their bodies] and comes out from the bones of their shoulders; it will then be placed on the bones of their shoulders and will pierce through the nipples of their breasts with a shivering motion movement. And their foreheads, sides, and backs will be burned until the heat enters their insides." This was explained above in the Qur'ānic verse and it will happen to them only after they enter Hellfire. Hence, the wrongdoer who does not give zakah will be joined together with others like him and with his property, to which he has become a slave [rather than being Allah's slave], which will be the cause of his punishment, even though he is not one of the people who have committed major blasphemy and who will reside in Hellfire forever. For in the last portion of the saying, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "He will then see his path, leading either to Paradise or to Hell." This will happen after fifty thousand years of punishment, as you count them, then he will enter Paradise.

The Prophet also said: "The polytheism in this community is more hidden than the creeping of ants." Ibn ʿAbbās and his companions interpreted this to mean as: unbelief in derogation of unbelief, wrong in derogation of wrong, and sin in derogation of sin. Allah says: "They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords beside Allah. And [they take as their Lord] Christ, the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One Allah: there is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: [Far is He] from having the partners they associate [with Him]" (9:31). In a lengthy ḥadith related by ʿUday Ibn Ḥātim [and narrated by Aḥmad, al-Tirmidhī, and others] when he was a Christian, he heard the Prophet (pbuh) reading this verse: "We do not worship them." Upon this the Prophet remarked: "Do not they prohibit what Allah makes lawful, so you prohibit it too: and they make lawful what Allah prohibits, so you make it lawful too?" He replied: "Yes." The Prophet replied: "That is worshiping them." Abu al-Bukhtarī[3] said: "As far as they did not pray for them even when they ordered them to worship them and not to worship Allah, they did not obey them. However, they ordered them and they made what Allah permits prohibited but what He prohibits they made permissible and they obeyed them. And that is al-rubūbiyyah, *worshiping entities other than Allah.*"

[3] Abu al-Bukhtarī, Sa'īd ibn Fayrūz al-Ṭā'ī (-82 A.H.), was a Successor and transmitted ḥadith from Abu Hurarah and Ibn ʿAbbās. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 84.]

Al-Rabīʿ Ibn Anas said that I asked Abu al-ʿĀliyah "How was the al-rubūbiyyah, of the children of Israel?" He answered that their kind of worship is that which they found in the Book of Allah; and they were ordered to follow it but they did not. They [the children of Israel] explained: "We will not contradict our disciples in anything. Whatever they order us to do we do and whatever they ask us not to do we do not. We adhere to their commands." Thus they took the advice of men and disregarded, behind their backs, the Book of Allah. It follows that the Prophet (pbuh) indicated that worshiping them consisted of their making lawful what is prohibited and prohibiting what is lawful; but not for praying or fasting to them, nor for making supplication to them in derogation of Allah. For this is an example of worshiping men in contrast to worshiping property, which was illustrated previously, and which Allah calls polytheism. Allah says: "... There is no god but He; praise and glory to Him: [Far is He] from having the partners they associate [with Him]" (9:31). This kind of polytheism is included in 'the wrong' illustrated in the following verse. Allah says: "Gather those who wronged along with their wives, and the things they worshiped besides Allah . . ." (37:22–23). Thus the wrongdoers and what they worship will be punished. For Allah says: "Indeed you [unbelievers], and the [false] gods that you worship besides Allah, are [but] fuel for Hell! To it will you [surely] come!" (21:98). The second part of the above mentioned verse, "the false gods that you worship besides Allah," includes all false gods that are worshiped. Hence, it includes the Prophets who were worshiped, such as Jesus and al-ʿUzayr. However, the verse "those for whom The Good Record from Us has gone before, will be removed far therefrom" is intended to exclude the worshiped Prophets who hated to be worshiped and obeyed, in disobedience to Allah. Those Prophets are the doers of good, like Jesus, al-ʿUzayr, and others. Hence they are far removed from the Fire.

Whoever agrees to be worshiped and obeyed for deeds that imply disobedience of Allah, deserves to be warned, even if he does not order others to worship him. And what if he orders others to worship him or to worship other than Allah? Such a person is one of the wives in the previously mentioned verse. For "their wives" may refer to their [the Prophets'] chiefs or followers. Indeed, they are their wives and those like them, for they are similar in religion, as indicated in the following verses. Allah says: "Gather those who wronged along with their wives, and the things they worshiped besides Allah and lead them to the Way of the [fierce] Fire!" (37:22–23). In this verse, the term dullūhum according to Ibn ʿAbbās as

well as al-Ḍaḥḥāk, means "show them," and according to Ibn Kaysān,[4] "introduce them." However, the true meaning is "guide them," as a guide shows one the way. Accordingly, the aʿnāq, *necks,* are called guides because they lead the whole body. Also, the leaders of the beasts are called guides. For Allah says: "But stop them, for they must be asked: What is the matter with you that you do not help each other" (37:24–25)? Namely, you helped each other to commit falsehood in the world. Allah also says: "No, but that day they shall submit [to judgement]: And they will turn to one another, and question one another. They will say: 'It was you who used to come to us from the right hand.' They will reply: 'No, you yourselves had no belief! Nor had we any authority over you. No, it was you who were a people in obstinate rebellion! So now it has been proved true, against us, the Word of our Lord that we shall indeed [have to] taste [the punishment for our sins]. We led you astray: for truly we were ourselves astray. Truly that day they will [all] share in the penalty. Indeed that is how We shall deal with sinners.' For they, when they were told that there is no god except Allah, would puff themselves up with pride, and say: 'What! Shall we give up our gods for the sake of a poet possessed?'" (37:26–36).

Allah also says: "He will say: enter you in the company of the peoples who passed away before you, men and jinns, into the Fire. Every time a new people enters, it curses its sister-people [that went before], until they follow each other, all into the Fire. Said the last about the first: 'Our Lord! It is these that misled us: so give them a double penalty in the Fire.' He will say: 'Doubled for all: but this you do not know.' Then the first will say to the last: 'See then! No advantage have you over us; so taste you of the penalty for all that you did!'" (7:38–39). Allah also says: "Behold, they will dispute with each other in the Fire! The weak ones [who followed] will say to those who had been arrogant: 'We but followed you: can you then take [on yourselves] from us some share of the Fire?' Those who had been arrogant will say: 'We are all in this [Fire]! Truly Allah has judged between [His] servants!'" (40:47–48). Allah also says: ". . . Can you but see when the wrongdoers will be made to stand before their Lord, throwing back the word [of blame] on one another! Those who were deemed weak will say to the arrogant ones: 'Had it not been for you, we should certainly have been believers!' The

[4] Ibn Kaysān, Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm Abu al-Ḥassan (-299 A.H.) was a philologist and a scholar of ḥadith. He wrote *al-Muhadhdhab Fil-Naḥw* and *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 85 and *al-Fihirst,* vol. 1, pp. 177-178.]

arrogant ones will say to those who were deemed weak: 'Was it we who kept you back from guidance after it reached you? No, rather, it was you who transgressed.' Those who had been deemed weak will say to the arrogant ones: 'No! It was a plot [of yours] by day and by night: Behold! You [constantly] ordered us to be ungrateful to Allah and to attribute equals to Him! They are filled with remorse when they see the penalty: We shall put yokes on the necks of the unbelievers: It would only be a requital for their ill deeds'" (34:31–33).

The verse "For they, when they were told that there is no god except Allah, would puff themselves up with pride" (37:35) refers to both unbelievers, the major and minor sinners, as well as to those who puff themselves up with pride about what Allah commands. For not puffing oneself with pride is part of affirming that there is no god but Allah, Who alone deserves to be worshiped. And whoever puffs himself up with pride about worshiping Allah, obeying and listening to other than Allah, does not confirm [in this context] that there is no god but Allah.

Those who take their priests and their anchorites as their lords, whereas they make lawful what Allah prohibits and prohibit what Allah makes lawful, such people are of two groups: one group knows that they [priests and their anchorites] changed the religion of Allah and [intentionally] followed them. Thus, they believe in making lawful what Allah prohibits and prohibiting what Allah makes lawful as part of following their leaders, though they know they have contradicted the path of the Messenger. This is indeed unbelief, and Allah and His Messenger considered it polytheism even though they did not pray or prostrate to them. He who follows other than Him, contrary to religion, knowing for a fact that it is contrary to religion, and believes in what he has said in derogation of what Allah and His Messenger have said, is certainly considered a polytheist. The other group has a strong belief in prohibiting the lawful and making lawful the prohibited. But they obey their priests and their anchorites in rebelling against Allah exactly like a Muslim who disobeys Allah although he knows that he is disobeying Him. Accordingly, this group will be treated as sinners, as indicated in the following saying of the Prophet: "Indeed, obedience should be to the good." The Prophet also said: "A Muslim can listen to and obey what he likes or hates unless he is ordered to disobey Allah; no creature should be obeyed if he is ordered to disobey Allah"; and: "Whoever orders you to disobey Allah, do not obey him." These ḥadiths are recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ (al-Bukhārī)*.

Anyone who makes the lawful forbidden and the forbidden lawful and does it with the intention of following the Messenger, and if the truth for some reason is not known to him and he is righteous to Allah as much as he is able, Allah will not punish him for his sin but will reward him for striving to obey his Lord. But anyone who knows something is wrong and contrary to the Messenger's teachings and still commits that wrong, he will be considered among those who associate with the people that Allah condemns. This is particularly the case when he follows his desire and supports that desire with his tongue and hand, knowing for a fact that he is contradicting the Messenger's way. This is a situation where the one committing it deserves punishment. Muslim scholars agree that anyone who knows the truth is not permitted to imitate anything that contradicts that truth. They disagree, however, on the permission of the one who is able to submit proof even though he is unable to demonstrate the truth which one knows. This is exactly like the one who knows that the religion of Islam is the truth while he is still among the Christians. Thus, if he performs of the truth what he is able, he will not be blamed for the things that he cannot do. This case will be similar that of the King of Ethiopia, al-Najāshī, and others. Allah has revealed, concerning their case, verses in His Book. Allah the Exalted says: "And there are among the People of the Book those who believe in Allah, in the revelation to you and in the revelation to them . . ." (3:199). Allah also says: "And among the people of Moses there is a group who guide and do justice in the light of the truth" (7:159); and: "When they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger you will see their eyes overflowing with tears for they recognize the truth . . ." (5:83).

As for the one who followed the one who is unable to know the truth in detail and tried his best by striving to imitate him, such a person will not be blamed for his sin. Anyone who imitates a person, choosing him over his opposite just for the sake of his desire, as in the case of facing Makkah while praying, and he still supports him both by his tongue and hand without knowing that he has the knowledge of the truth, such a person will be considered to be among the people of ignorance. This is the case even when the person he is following is in the right. His knowledge will not be right, even when the one he follows is in the wrong; then he would be committing a sin. This is simply like the one who renders his own opinion about the Qur'ān. Even if he is correct, he is still committing a wrong and when he is wrong he will certainly have his abode in Hellfire. Such a person will be like the one who does not give zakah and will be liable for punishment. He

will also be like those people who worship a dinār, a dirham, velvet, and silk. Such a person who loved wealth to the point that it prevented him from worshiping and obeying Allah and who becomes a slave of wealth, he will be among those who commit minor shirk, *association.* He will receive the threat of punishment, in accordance with the following ḥadith: "Even a slight hypocrisy is considered polytheism." This is explained, with supporting evidence, when unbelief and polytheism are used in an absolute sense, with reference to many sins.

The absolute wrong implies [but is not limited to] unbelief. For it may refer to unbelief as well as what is less serious than unbelief, such as committing minor sins like wickedness and rebellion, as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd, who said: "I said to the Messenger of Allah, which sin is the gravest?" The Messenger replied: "You who make a partner with Allah, though it is He who has created you." He [the inquirer] said: "Then what?" The Messenger replied: "That you kill your child out of fear that he will share your food." He [the inquirer] said: "Then what?" He replied: "That you commit adultery with your neighbor's wife." Then Allah reveals the following verses. Allah says: "Those who invoke no other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred, except for just cause, nor commit fornication, for any that does this [not only] meets punishment [but] the penalty on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is forgiving, most merciful. And whoever repents and does good has truly turned to Allah with an [acceptable] conversion" (25:68–71).

Thus, the complete warning refers to the three sins of polytheism, killing, and fornication. Every sin contributes to its own portion. Hence, if one is a polytheist but does not kill or fornicate, his penalty will be less than that if he commits all three sins. Similarly, if he fornicates and kills but is not a polytheist, he will share in the burden of penalty as indicated in the following verse. Allah says: "If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein: and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him" (4:93). In this verse, Allah does not mention that a killer will abide in Hell forever. Indeed, it is said that the term al-taʾbīd, *forever,* is not mentioned in the Qurʾān, except in the case of unbelief. Allah says: "The day that the wrongdoer will bite at his hands, he will say, 'Oh! Would that I had taken a [straight] path with the Messenger! Ah! Woe is me! Would that I had never taken such a one for

a friend! He did lead me astray from the Message [of Allah] after it had come to me! Ah! The Devil is but a traitor to man!'" (25:27–29). No doubt these verses refer to the unbeliever who does not believe in the Messenger. This is the reason these verses were revealed. For the absolute wrong includes unbelieving plus other lesser kinds of wrong. It follows that whoever takes one for a friend against what Allah and His Messenger command will have to receive his share of the warning, as illustrated in the following verses. Allah says: "Friends on that Day will be foes, one to another, except the righteous ones" (43:67); and: "Then would those who are followed clear themselves of those who follow [them]: they would see the penalty, and all relations between them would be cut off" (2:166). Al-Fuḍayl Ibn ʿAyyāḍ[5] said that al-Layth narrated on the authority of Mujāhid that the word "friendship" means affection between friends that is not for the sake of Allah. Indeed, friendship is expressed by way of loving and endearment. For the Prophet (pbuh) said: "A man follows the path of his friend." That is, each of the lovers loves what the other loves. Thus, if one follows his friend who loves to do what Allah and His Messenger hate, then the religion of both will diminish until it ends up with grave polytheism. Allah says: "Yet there are men who take [for worship] others besides Allah, as equal [with Allah]: they love them as they should love Allah, but those of belief are overflowing in their love for Allah . . ." (2:165).

Those that love their treasure and the creatures they follow in preference to the love of Allah and His Messenger will suffer accordingly from wrong and polytheism. Hence, Allah makes them adhere to what they love, as in the ḥadith where He says: "Is it not just of Me to appoint every man among you what he used to be appointed to in the world?"[6] Also, it is confirmed in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Every community should follow what they used to worship. Thus, whoever used to worship the sun should follow the sun; whoever used to worship the moon should follow the moon; whoever used to worship tyrant rulers should follow their tyrant rulers; and Christ was made to appear to the Christians; likewise ʿUzayr was made to appear to the Jews. Thus, every community follows what they used to worship, and this community would continue to have its

[5] Al-Fuḍayl ibn ʿAyyāḍ ibn Masʿūd, Abu ʿAlī (-187 A.H.), was a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith born in Samarqand. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 89.]

[6] The editors of MI.2 and MKZ, editions have indicated, in footnotes, that they could not find a reference for this ḥadith.

hypocrites." This will be explained later. Indeed, those are the people of the major polytheism.

Those who are slaves of treasure they own or of men they obey will be punished in a manner less severe than that of the polytheists. Indeed, they will be punished either in the courtyards of Resurrection or in Hell. Whoever loves anything other than Allah will be punished by means of it. Allah says: "Oh, you who believe! Spend out of [the bounties] We have provided for you, before the Day comes when no bargaining [will avail], nor friendship, nor intercession. Those unbelievers are the wrongdoers" (2:254). That is, absolute unbelief is the absolute wrong. Hence, unbelievers and wrongdoers have no one to intercede for them on the Day of Judgment. Intercession is also precluded in the following verses of the Qur'ān. Allah says: "Warn them of the Day that is [ever] drawing near, when their hearts will [come] right up to their throats to choke [them]; no intimate friend nor intercessor will the wrongdoers have who could be listened to. Allah knows of [the tricks] that deceive with the eyes, and all that the hearts [of men] conceal" (40:18–19); and Allah says: "Then they will be thrown headlong into the [Fire], they and those straying in Evil, and all the hosts of Iblīs together. They will say, when they are quarreling therein: 'By Allah, we were truly in error, manifested when we held you as equal with the Lord of the Worlds, and our seducers were only those who were steeped in guilt; now, we have none to intercede [for us], nor a single friend to feel [for us]; now, if we only had a chance of return, we shall truly be among those who believe!'" (26:94–102). In the above-mentioned verse, the phrase "we held you as equal" does not mean that they [polytheists] make what they worship equal to Allah in every respect. For none of Adam's sons claim such a thing. None of the unbelievers claim that in this world there are two identical Creators. Even the dualist 'Zoroastrians' who speak of two origins, 'light' and 'darkness' agree that it is better to worship the light than the evil darkness, which deserves to be condemned and cursed. They also differ over whether darkness is eternal or temporal. Hence, they do not consider light and darkness to be equal. Likewise are the Arab polytheists, who agree on the fact that their gods do not share with Allah in the creation of the heavens and the earth. However, they acknowledge that Allah created the heavens, the earth, and what is between them, as indicated in many verses of the Qur'ān. Allah says: "If indeed you ask them who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon [to His Law], they will certainly reply, 'Allah.' How are they then deluded away

[from the truth]? Allah enlarges the sustenance [which He gives] to whichever of His servants He pleases; and He [similarly] grants by [strict] measure [as He pleases]: for Allah has full knowledge of all things. And if indeed you ask them who it is that sends down rain from the sky, and gives life therewith to the earth after its death, they will certainly reply, 'Allah!' Say: 'Praise be to Allah!' But most of them do not understand" (29:61–63). He also says: "If you were to question them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they would be sure to reply, 'They were created by [Him], the Exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge'; [Yes, the same that] has made for you the earth [like a carpet] spread out, and has made for you roads [and channels] therein, in order that you may find guidance [on the way]; that sends down [from time to time] rain from the sky in due measure; and We raise to life therewith a land that is dead; even so will you be raised [from the dead]; that has created pairs in all things, and has made for you ships and cattle on which you ride in order that you may sit firm and square on their backs, and when so seated you may celebrate the [kind] favor of your Lord, and say: 'Glory to Him Who has subjected these to our [use], for we could never have accomplished this [by ourselves], and to our Lord, surely, must we turn back'" (43:9–14).

It is worth mentioning here that the characteristics of the words of Allah are not the complete response of the unbelievers. Allah says: "Say: 'To whom belong the earth and all beings therein? [Say] if you know!' They will say to Allah: 'Yet will you not receive admonition?' Say: 'Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Throne [of Glory] Supreme?' They will say: 'They belong to Allah . . .'" (23:84–87). Allah also says: "Say: Can you see yourselves, if the punishment of Allah come upon you, or the Hour [that you dread], would you then call upon other than Allah? [Reply] if you are truthful! No, on Him would you call, and if it be His Will, He would remove [the distress] which occasioned your call upon Him, and you would forget [the false gods] which you join with Him!" (6:40–41) and: ". . . [Who] is better? Allah or the false gods they associate [with Him]? Or Who has created the heavens and the earth, and Who sends you down rain from the sky? Yes, with it We cause to grow well-planted orchards full of beauty and delight: it is not in your power to cause the growth of the trees in them. [Can there be another] god besides Allah? No, they are a people who swerve from justice. Or, Who has made the earth firm to live on; made rivers in its midst; set thereon mountains immovable; and made a separating bar between the two bodies of

flowing water? Can there be another god besides Allah? No, but most of them do not know " (27:59–61). This is a question which assumes a negative reply. The answer will certainly be: there is no god but Allah who does this.

Any of the interpreters of the Qur᾽ān who say that what is meant by the above-mentioned verse, "Is there another god besides Allah?" are mistaken. For they used to have other gods besides Allah, as indicated in the following sayings of Allah: ". . . Can you possibly bear witness that besides Allah there is another god? Say: 'No! I cannot bear witness! . . .'" (6:19). Allah also says: ". . . The deities, other than Allah, whom they invoked, did not profit them . . ." (11:101) and: "Has he made [all] the gods into one god? Truly this is a wonderful thing" (38:5). Indeed, they admit that their deities do not share with Allah either in the creation of the heavens and the earth nor in the creation of any other thing. But they used to take them for intercessors and mediators, as Allah says: "They worship, besides Allah, things that neither hurt them nor profit them, and they say: 'These are our intercessors with Allah . . .'" (10:18); and: "It would not be reasonable of me if I did not serve Him Who created me, and to Whom you shall [all] be brought back. Shall I take [other] gods besides Him? If [Allah] Most Gracious should intend some adversity for me, of no use whatever will be their intercession for me, nor can they deliver me" (36:22–23); and: "Give this warning to those in whose [hearts] is the fear that they will be brought (to Judgment) before their Lord; except for Him they will have no protector nor intercessor . . ." (6:51); and: "It is Allah Who has created the heavens and the earth, and all between them, in six Days, and is firmly established on the Throne [of authority]: you have none, besides Him, to protect or intercede [for you]: Will you not then receive admonition?" (32:4); and: "Say: [Oh, Muḥammad] Call upon other [gods] whom you fancy, besides Allah: they have no power, not the weight of an atom, in the heavens or on earth: no [sort of] share have they therein, nor are any of them a helper to Allah. No intercession can avail in His Presence, except for those from whom He has granted permission . . ." (34:22–23). Hence He denies that anyone besides Him possesses power or even a portion of power, or acts as His protector. Nothing remains except intercession, which is not beneficial except for those to whom Allah has granted permission, as illustrated in the following verses. Allah says: ". . . Who is there who can intercede in His presence except as He allows . . .?" (2:255); and He, the Exalted, said about the Angels: ". . . They offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable except for him with whom He is

pleased . . ." (21:28). Allah says: "And there are many Angels in the heavens, whose intercession will avail nothing except after Allah has given leave for whom He wills and pleases" (53:26).

Thus, even this intercession, which the polytheists think they will be offered, will be ruled out on the Day of Judgment as it is in the Qur'ān. The Prophet (pbuh) was told that [on the Day of Judgment] he would bow down to Allah and praise Him, and would not ask first for intercession. When he prostrated and praised his Lord with praises that Allah Himself bestowed upon him, then it would be said to him: "Oh, Muḥammad! Raise your head, and you will be heard; ask and it will be granted; intercede and intercession will be granted." Then the Prophet said: "Oh, Lord of my people, but that a limit would be set for him." He [the Prophet] would make them enter Paradise. He [the Prophet] returned then and prostrated himself. He then did the same thing a second and third time. Abu Hurayrah asked: "Who enjoys the greatest share of your intercession on the Day of Judgment?" Upon this the Prophet answered: "He who says there is no god but Allah with a sincere heart." It follows that intercession will not be granted, except with Allah's permission, to those who are sincere. It will not be granted to anyone who associates anything with Him. Indeed, it will not be granted except with His own permission. Surely Allah will show favor to those who are sincere and believe in the oneness of Allah. He [Allah] will forgive them through the intercession of the Prophet (pbuh) who was kindly permitted to intercede, in order to honor Him and obtain the praiseworthy position which inspires the envy of both leaders and followers. Just as he [the Prophet] used to pray for them, this was indeed his intercession on their behalf. Indeed, Allah kindly responded to his prayer and intercession.

From the previous discussion it follows that wrong is of three kinds: the wrong of polytheism, for which no intercession can be offered, and which is done by people to each other. It is necessary that the person wronged be granted his rights. Indeed, the right of the wronged party cannot be nullified either via intercession nor by any other means. But the wronged individual may get (something) from the wrongdoer or he himself may forgive the wrongdoer via intercession. Accordingly, the absolute wrongdoer [the polytheist] has no effective intercessor, whereas whoever believes in the oneness of Allah is not an absolute wrongdoer but a person who wrongs himself via his sincerity to Allah; thus he benefits from intercession. Indeed, the negation of intercession cited in the Qur'ān is a negation of

polytheism. Namely, one must not rely on the intercessor to the point of praying to him instead of praying to Allah. It follows that prohibition of the intercession that leads one to polytheism is a prohibition of polytheism. This means that nothing but Allah must be worshiped, prayed to, or relied on, either in intercession or in other matters. Thus, one must not rely on any [but Allah] to provide him with the means of his own sustenance, which Allah provides through various means.

Similarly, he must not rely on any [but Allah] to forgive and grant him mercy in the Hereafter, even if Allah forgives and grants him mercy through different means, such as intercession. For the intercession absolutely repudiated in the Qur'ān implies polytheism, which is also repudiated. Hence, Allah permits intercession in some situations that the Prophet (pbuh) indicated are only to benefit the sincere who believe in the oneness of Allah: To put it differently, sinners who believe in the oneness of Allah will benefit, as He permits, from intercession.

The muqayyad, *conditioned,* wrong includes wronging one's soul and wronging other people, as indicated in the sayings of Adam (pbuh) and Eve. Allah says: "... Our Lord! We have wronged our souls . . ." (7:23); and Moses said: ". . . Oh my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul . . ." (28:16). Allah says: "And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins . . ." (3:135). In these verses, Adam and Moses are talking about well-known, specific, but not widespread events that surely do not reflect unbelief. And thus it became known that this is not unbelief, Praise be to Allah.

As for the saying of Allah: "And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls . . ." (3:135).This is an indefinite condition that is generalized to include every single thing that implies wronging one's soul. If one repents, after having been a polytheist, Allah forgives him. As previously mentioned, wronging one's soul includes all sins, whether they are major or minor. Allah says: "Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our servants as We have chosen: but there are among them some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds . . ." (35:32). Wronging oneself is connected with something else and does not include the major wrong [polytheism]. It is narrated on the authority

of Ibn Masʿūd that when this verse: "It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong . . ." (6:82) was revealed, the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) found it difficult to believe. They said: "Who among us [is so fortunate] that he does not wrong himself?" Upon this the Prophet answered: "This is polytheism: do you not hear the saying of the righteous person [Luqmān]: 'Indeed, polytheism is a grave wrong'" (31:13). Indeed, the Prophet's Companions thought that the conditional wrong mentioned in the verse "it is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong" meant wronging one's soul and that whoever wrongs his soul is insecure and misguided. Therefore, the Prophet (pbuh) explained to them that polytheism is one kind of wrong [whereas there is also insecurity and misguidance], as cited in the Book of Allah. Thus, whoever does not confuse his belief with wrong is someone who enjoys security and guidance. He is also among those whom Allah has chosen, as indicated in His saying: "Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our servants as We have chosen: but there are among them some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds; that is the highest Grace. Gardens of Eternity will they enter . . ." (35:32–33). However, this is not to deny the fact that Allah will blame whoever [among them] wrongs himself if he does not repent, as indicated in the following verses. Allah says: "Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it" (99:7–8) and: ". . . Whoever works evil will be requited accordingly . . ." (4:123).

Abu Bakr [al-Ṣiddīq] once asked the Prophet (pbuh) about the verse "whoever works evil will be requited accordingly," saying: "Oh, Messenger of Allah, who among us does not commit evil?" He [the Prophet] answered: "Oh, Abu Bakr, do you not feel fatigue? Do you not grieve? Does not calamity befall you? These are what you will be requited for [Allah rewards you for them]." Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) indicated that a believer who enters Paradise, if he repents, he may be requited for his evil deeds by calamities that befell him in his life, as indicated by the Prophet's sayings (recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*): "The believer is like a bouquet of plants that is surrounded [controlled] by the wind. The wind sometimes makes it stand erect and other times bends it. The hypocrite is like a cedar tree which remains rooted in the ground then, all of a sudden, it is uprooted; and: "Whatever the believer suffers such as illness, fatigue, calamity,

sadness, grief, harm, even if a thorn pricks him, Allah purges him of his sins." Likewise, Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ said: "Oh, Messenger of Allah, who among the people bears the most affliction?" He [the Prophet] replied: "The Prophets, then the righteous ones, then those closest to perfection, then the typical. A man is afflicted according to the degree of his faith. If he has a strong belief, Allah strengthens his affliction. However, if he has a weak belief, Allah reduces his affliction. The believer will remain afflicted until the time comes when he walks on the street without sin" (recorded by Aḥmad, al-Tirmidhī, and others). The Prophet (pbuh) also said: "Sickness purges sins as a dry tree casts down its leaves." There are many such ḥadiths on this topic.

It follows that whoever safeguards himself against the three kinds of wrong[7] is [truly] secure and rightly guided. But, whoever wrongs his soul is [truly, but not wholly] secure and rightly guided [namely, the sinners who believe in the oneness of Allah are secure, and the guided enter Paradise, but only after punishment]. That is, whoever safeguards himself, will enter Paradise as Allah promises. For He [Allah] shows the straight path, the result of which is Paradise. However, he is not [wholly] secure and rightly guided, for he commits evil. The deficiency in security and guidance is in accordance with the deficiency in his belief due to wronging his soul. The Prophet (pbuh) does not mean by his saying: "Indeed it is polytheism" that if this type of polytheism is not the major polytheism, then one has true security and true guidance. For many verses of the Qur'ān and many sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) indicate that the people who commit major sins have reason to fear. Thus, they are neither [truly] in security nor under right guidance, by which they see the right path. This is the way of those—the Prophets, the sincere, the martyrs, and the righteous ones—on whom Allah bestows His Grace with no punishment; these will enter Paradise. However, if by the phrase "Indeed it is polytheism" the Prophet (pbuh) meant the major polytheism, then his intention was that whoever is not a polytheist is secure from the penalty that Allah warns polytheists with [in the earth and Hereafter] and is rightly guided. However, if the

[7] The three kinds of wrong are: the absolute wrong, which is polytheism, and two kinds of conditioned wrong: wronging one's soul and wronging others. The phrase "[true] security and right guidance" refers to the following verse: "It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong that are [truly] in security, for they are under right guidance" (6:82).

Prophet (pbuh) intended polytheism [in general], then it can be said that wronging one's soul is like being a miser, for the love of property due to his abandoning of an obligation is a minor sort of polytheism. So also is one's preference for his own desires over the love of Allah. Thus he will prefer liking himself over the love of Allah, and this is a minor polytheism. Such a man lacks [true] security and [right] guidance due to his sin. And that is why the pious ancestors used to consider the sins that may lead to wronging one's soul.

Chapter Seven

The Meanings of the Terms Righteousness and Corruption

This chapter focuses on the terms al-ṣalāḥ, *righteousness,* and al-fasād, *corruption.* If the word "righteousness" is applied in an absolute manner, then it refers to all good; likewise, "corruption" refers to all evil. The same applies to the terms: "the righteous ones" and "the corrupt ones," as indicated in the following verses of the Qur'ān. As Allah says in the story of Moses: ". . . Is it your intention to slay me as you did to another soul yesterday? The intention is none other than to become a powerful, violent man in the land and not to be one of the righteous ones" (28:19); and ". . . Moses had charged his brother Aaron: 'Act for me among my people: do right, and follow not the way of the corrupt ones'" (7:142); and "When it is said to them: 'Make not corruption on the earth,' they say: 'Why, we only want to make peace! Surely, they are the corrupt ones, but they do not realize it'" (2:11–12). In the following, the pronoun "man," *who,* refers to the hypocrites. Allah says: "Among the people there are some who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day;' but they do not [really] believe" (2:8). This reference [to the people] is used in a general way which refers to people at and after the time of the Prophet (pbuh). For this reason Salmān al-Fārisī[1] said that by this verse, Allah means a people that were not yet created when the verse was revealed. Al-Suddī said, on the authority of his teachers, that the word fasād, *corruption,* is to be interpreted to mean both unbelief and rebellion. And Mujāhid said that corruption means not following the commands and avoiding things that are prohibited. Both of these statements mean one and the same thing. However, according to Ibn ʿAbbās, corruption means unbelief. The following is the statement by those who

[1] Salmān al-Fārisī (?–32 A.H.) was a Companion of the Prophet and transmitted some ḥadith. [M. M. Azami, p. 55.]

said that hypocrisy is those who befriended the unbelievers and revealed to them the secrets of the believers. But Abu al-ʿĀliyah and Muqātil said that it is practicing mischief. This last opinion is general in nature and agrees with the first two opinions.

Indeed, their [the hypocrites'] saying: ". . . We only want to do good. . ." (2:11) has two [true] interpretations as recorded by Ibn ʿAbbās: One is that they deny what they are accused of. In this case, it is as if they are saying: "We are doing what the Messenger orders us to do." The other interpretation is that they are saying: "We are only doing the righteous [deeds] and by it we intend to do good ." In fact, they mention the former interpretation for one who does not know their inner intentions, and they mention the latter for themselves and others who know their inner intentions. It follows that the latter interpretation implies the former. For their [the hypocrites'] observed behavior is the reverse of their inner intentions; and they view this act as right [in the world]. Hence, if authority is in the hands of the Prophet (pbuh), then they feel secure in following him, and if authority is in the hands of the unbelievers, then they feel secure through their friendship with them. Thus Allah says: "They are the corrupt ones, but they realize [it] not" (2:12). That is, they realize that what they have done is a mischievous act, not a right act. It may also mean that they do not realize that Allah has acquainted His Messenger with their corruption. The second statement is inclusive in the first. This is what is intended as illustrated in the following Qurʾānic verse. Allah says: "Indeed My Protector is Allah, Who has revealed the Book, and He protects the righteous ones" (7:196). He also says: ". . . Moses said: 'What you have brought is sorcery; Allah will surely make it of no effect. Indeed, Allah does not set right the work of the corrupt ones" (10:81). Yūsuf [Joseph] said. Allah says: ". . . Cause me to die as a Muslim and join me with the righteous ones" (12:101).

A more general expression may be joined to a more specific one, as indicated in the following verse. Allah says: "When he turns his back, his aim everywhere is to spread corruption throughout the earth and destroy crops and cattle. But Allah loves not corruption." (2:205). In this verse it is said that the phrase "to spread corruption throughout the earth," implies unbelief as well as wrong [wherein both interpretations are true]. Allah says: "That Home of the Hereafter [Paradise], We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth nor spread corruption with pride and oppression in the land . . ." (28:83); and "Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and divided its people into sects, weakening each group among

them, killing their sons and letting their females live. Indeed, he was one of the most corrupt ones" (28:4). Allah also says: "On this account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading corruption in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people . . ." (5:32). Thus, slaying a person is implied in corruption. The right to take revenge for the slain person is for the guardian of the victim. Yet during the time of the Wars of Apostasy, fighting, and fornication the right to take revenge was for all the people. For this reason it was said that this right is for Allah, and for this reason no one is to be excused because it spread corruption at large. Allah says: "The recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and spread corruption through the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off on the opposite sides . . ." (5:33). It is said that the reason for the revelation of this verse is because the ʿAranīyūn[2] are those who apostatized, rebelled, killed, and took property back from the Muslims [at the time of the first Caliph, Abu Bakr]. Some say that the cause of the revelation of this verse was that some people made a covenant, then they broke it and started to fight back. Others say that this verse was revealed because of the polytheists, since it is connected with the people of the apostasy and those who broke their covenant and started to fight back. However, the majority of the pious ancestors and the later Muslims believe that this verse dealt with highway robbers from among the Muslims. In fact, this verse refers to all of the above.

Similarly, in many verses of the Qur'ān, the terms ṣalāḥ, *righteousness,* and iṣlāḥ, *doing good,* are associated with the term Iman. For example, Allah says: "Indeed, those who believe and do deeds of righteousness . . ." (2:277); and ". . . Those who believe and do good upon them shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve" (6:48). It is well known that Iman is the most righteous deed and the best deed of righteousness. This is indicated by the saying of the Prophet [recorded in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*] by those who asked him: "Oh, Messenger of Allah, which of all deeds is the best?" The Messenger replied: "Belief in Allah is the best deed." Allah says: "And indeed, I am Forgiving to him who repents, believes and does righteous deeds, and then remains constant in doing so" (20:82); and "Accepts those who repent and believe and work righteousness. Such will enter Paradise . . ." (19:60); and "Accepts those who repent and believe and do righteous deeds, for such persons,

[2] These people are attributed to the tribe of ʿAraynah. This tribe embraced Islam after the death of the Prophet (pbuh), then they rejected Islam and joined the Apostates.

Allah will change their sins into good deeds . . .." (25:70). And concerning qadhf, *false accusation,* Allah says: "Accept those who repent after that and do righteous deeds. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (3:89). And concerning the thief, Allah says: "But whosoever repents after his wrong and does righteous deeds then indeed, Allah will pardon him . . ." (5:39); and "And the two persons [a man and a woman] among you who commit sexual intercourse [illegally], punish them both. And if they repent and do righteous good deeds, leave them alone . . ." (4:16). The legal Muslim scholars, in one of their verdicts, stipulated a condition in accepting of the testimony of the one who has made false accusation that he has to show good conduct for approximately one year. This is in accordance with the case that ʿUmar [Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb] applied on Ṣubayyigh Ibn ʿAsal, whom he made wait for a year before restoring his status of good conduct. Following what ʿUmar [Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb] did with Ṣubayyigh Ibn ʿAsal, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] used the same analogy with the case of the one who is calling for bidʿah, *innovation,* that he must also wait for a year to restore his status of good conduct.

Chapter Eight

Literal Meaning and Figurative Meaning

It has been said that the various semantic forms of a word are clear, straightforward, and indisputable, whether used in an absolute sense or a conditioned sense, in the speech of Allah and His Prophet or in the speech of anyone else. But we say that the meaning of the word Iman, *belief,* when applied to works, is used in a majāz, *figurative sense*. For the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Belief consists of over sixty or seventy odd branches. The highest branch is: 'There is no god but Allah' and the lowest is: 'Removal of harm from the road.'" This is a figurative use of speech. He [the Prophet] also said: "Belief is for you to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers" to the end of this saying. This is a ḥaqīqah, *literal*[1] *usage,* and it is the foundation for the claims of the Murji'ites, the Jahmites, the Karrāmites and everyone who does not include works within the term Iman.[2]

To this controversy we offer two replies. First, there is general speech related to the terms ḥaqīqah and majāz, *literal* and *figurative;* and second, there is speech that pertains specifically to the topic at hand. Considering that one of the two uses of speech may be figurative, then how is one to determine which uses of speech

[1] In his scholarly article "On the Genesis of the Ḥaqīqa-Majāz Dichotomy," *Studia Islamica* 59, 1984, pp. 111–40, Wolfhart Heinrichs presents the following sets of terms for the dichotomy of majāz versus ḥaqīqah (figurative versus proper or topical vs. veridical). He also stated that the term majāz is a technical marked term and has an older history before it became associated with ḥaqīqah. Ḥaqīqah is translated here as *literal* and majāz as *figurative*.

[2] We would like to thank Dr. Awad al-Jemaey who teaches Arabic rhetoric at the University of Umm al-Qurā at Makkah for reading this chapter and making some useful comments. We also would like to thank an anonymous reviewer who made valuable comments on this chapter and other chapters throughout the book.

are literal and which are figurative? Is literal speech that which is applied in an absolute manner, or that which is used in a conditioned sense? Or, if both of these usages are literal, if applied in an absolute sense, then how may one know what the term "belief" refers to?

First it may be said that if the terms "literal" and "figurative" are used either with respect to the meaning of words or the way in which their meanings are signified, then the division of words and their various meanings into literal and figurative may be said to fall within the claims made by later thinkers. But the most widespread view is that both literal and figurative usages are min ʿawāriḍ al-alfāẓ, *among the accident aspects of words.* In any case, this division is an iṣṭilāḥ ḥādith, *a recent convention,* that was not agreed upon until three centuries after the advent of Islam. It was never mentioned by the Companions of the Prophet or their Successors nor by any of the well-known religious scholars, such as Mālik, al-Thawrī,[3] al-Awzāʿī, Abu Ḥanīfah, or al-Shāfiʿi. In fact, it was not even mentioned by philologists and grammarians, such as al-Khalīl, Sībawayh,[4] Abu ʿAmr Ibn al-ʿAlāʾ, and others. The first person known to have spoken of the use of figurative speech was Abu ʿUbaydah Muʿammar Ibn al-Muthannā, who mentioned it in his book.[5] However, by 'figurative' he did not mean that which is a counterpart of 'literal.' Rather, what he meant by the figurative sense of the Qurʾānic verse, *majāz al-āyah,* was that through which the meaning of the verse is expressed. For this reason, religious scholars such as Abu al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī and others have said that we may distinguish literal from figurative meaning in various ways. Among these is the method employed by philologists, who declare that this is literal, and that is figurative. In relying on such a method one speaks without knowledge. For he assumes that the philologists made such a distinction, whereas in fact, none of them ever said such a thing. Nor had the pious ancestors or scholars of Islam. Rather, it is a recent convention, introduced much later, and was most likely first adopted by the Muʿtazilites and other scholastic theologians. For such discussions

[3] Sufyān al-Thawrī Abu ʿAbd Allah Ibn Saʿīd (97–161 A.H.) was one of the best scholars of ḥadith. His major works are *al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr* and *al-Jāmi al-Ṣaghīr*. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 158.]

[4] Sībawayh, Abu Bishr ʿAmr Ibn ʿUthmān Ibn Qanbar (?–178), was the most celebrated grammarian and was author of the famous book *al-Kitab*. [Al-Fihrist, vol. 2, p. 1101.]

[5] Abu ʿUbaydah (?–209 A.H.) was a very well-known grammarian of the school of Baṣrah. He wrote *Majāz al-Qurʾān* (edited by Fuʾād Sezgin) 2 vols., Cairo, 1962. For further information on Abu ʿUbaydah's point of view concerning the concept of majāz see the article by Wolfhart Heinrichs on this subject.

cannot be attributed to any of the scholars of Muslim jurisprudence, commentators on the Qur'ān and ḥadith, or any of the pious ancestors. Al-Shāfiʿī, the first to write a book on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, did not distinguish between literal and figurative, nor did he discuss the terms ḥaqīqah and majāz. Nor did Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥassan,[6] whose writings on issues relating to the Arabic language, including his book *al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr,* are well known. As for other religious scholars, the only one among them known to have used the terms 'literal' and 'figurative' is Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, who in his book *The Refutation of the Jahmites* comments on the pronouns [innā and naḥnu], two forms of the pronoun *we,* and other such expressions found in the Qur'ān, that are used in the plural to refer to the singular. He claims this to be a figurative use of language. If someone says: "We shall give you," *innā sanuʿṭīka,* and *innā sanafʿalu,* "we shall do," this is a figurative use of language. On this basis some of his [Ibn Ḥanbal] followers, for example, the judge Abu Yaʿlā and Ibn ʿAqīl, Abu al-Khaṭṭāb,[7] and others, argued that the Qur'ān contains figurative language. However, others of his followers, such as Abu al-Ḥassan al-Jazrī, Abu ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ḥāmid,[8] and Abu al-Faḍl al-Tamīmī Ibn Abī al-Ḥassan al-Tamīmī,[9] denied the use of figurative language in the Qur'ān. It was also denied by Muḥammad Ibn Khuwayzmandād[10] and others belonging to the Mālikī school, as well as Dā'ūd Ibn ʿAlī, his son Abu Bakr, and Mundhir Ibn Saʿīd Ballūṭī,[11] who wrote a book on the subject.

Two different accounts relating to this controversy have been passed down on Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's authority. As for all other Muslim authorities, none of them, even among Aḥmad's early followers, claimed that the Qur'ān contains figurative speech: neither Mālik nor al-Shāfiʿī nor Abu Ḥanīfah. Rather, the division of words into literal and figurative did not become widespread until the fourth century A.H. The earliest indications of this division began to appear in the third

[6] Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥassan (?–189 A.H.) was a Ḥanafī jurist. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 101.]

[7] Abu al-Khaṭṭāb, Maḥfūẓ Ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥassan (?–510 A.H.) was a famous Ḥanbalī scholar of fiqh. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 102.]

[8] ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ḥāmid (?–403 A.H.) was the Imām of the Ḥanbalites of his time. One of his books is *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 102.]

[9] Abu Faḍl al-Tamīmī (?–401 A.H.) was a famous Ḥanbalī jurist. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 102.]

[10] Khuwayzmandād, Muḥammad Ibn Abu Bakr (n.d.), was a Mālikī scholar of fiqh and Qur'ān interpretation. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 102.]

[11] Al-Ballūṭī, Mundhir Ibn Saʿīd (?–385 A.H.), was the chief judge of his time and a jurist in al-Andalus (Spain). [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 8, p. 229.]

century A.H., although the basic linguistic usages of this division can possibly be found in the latter part of the second century A.H. Those who deny that Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and others employed a division between literal and figurative usages have argued that when Aḥmad used the phrase, *min majāz al-lughah,* he did not mean "figurative use of language," but rather, "that which is permissible in linguistic usage." In other words, it is permissible for one enjoying a position of power or prestige to say: "We did such and such" or "We are doing such and such," and the like. According to these people, Aḥmad did not intend by this to say that the word in question had been used to convey a meaning other than its original signification.

Another group, including Abu Isḥāq al-Isfarā'īnī[12], denied the use of figurative language, either in the Qur'ān or anywhere else. Those who disagreed with Abu Isḥāq claimed that their dispute with him was merely terminological. For if he granted that a word may be used to convey a meaning other than that which it conveyed originally and whose meaning may only be ascertained through the context, then this is a figurative use of language, even if he did not refer to it as such. His supporters, on the other hand, pointed out that those who classified word use into literal and figurative said that literal usage refers to words that are used to convey the same meaning that they conveyed originally, while figurative usage refers to words that are used to convey a meaning different from what they originally signified. The words asad, *lion,* and ḥimār, *donkey,* for example, may either be used to refer to two kinds of beast, or to a valiant person and a dull-witted one, respectively. Moreover, this division into literal and figurative usages requires the word in question to already have been established as having a particular meaning. Once this has taken place, the word may either be used with its originally intended meaning, or with some other meaning. For this reason, it is widely agreed upon among those who employ such a division that any word that may be used figuratively must also have a literal meaning, though it is not necessary for every word used literally to have a figurative meaning. However, some who came later objected to this view, saying that a word established as having a particular meaning before it is used is neither literal nor figurative,

[12] Al-Isfarāyīnī, Abu Isḥāq Ibrāhīm Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm (?–418 A.H), was one of the major scholars of the Ash'arites and was a contemporary of al-Bāqilānī, a major theologian. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 103; al-Ziriklī, vol.1, p. 59; and *EI* 2, p. 107.]

whereas if it is used to convey a meaning other than its original signification, then it has a figurative usage without any literal meaning.

All the foregoing would be correct were it known that Arabic lexical items were first established with certain meanings, then later were used in accordance with these same meanings, in which case their established meanings would precede their use. This would only be true in the case of someone who considered languages to be based on an agreed convention, such that a group of sensible, rational individuals had met together and agreed on what everything was to be called, then made such meanings generally applicable to all languages. This is a position that we know no Muslim to have taken prior to Abu Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī.[13] Both Abu Hāshim and Abu al-Ḥassan al-Ashʿarī were students of Abu ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī. However, al-Ashʿarī retreated from the doctrines of the Muʿtazilites, as he disagreed with them over matters such as al-qadr wal-waʿīd, *predestination and the threat of damnation,* the names and decrees of Allah, and the divine attributes. The contradictions he exposed in their doctrines have become well known. Al-Ashʿarī and Abu Hāshim disputed over the principle of mabdaʾ al-lughāt, *the origin of languages.* According to Abu Hāshim, language is iṣṭilāḥiyyah, *based on established convention,* whereas al-Ashʿarī held that language is tawqifiyyah, *based on learning and experience.* Later on, others delved into this issue as well, with some claiming that part of language is based on established convention, and part is based on experience. Moreover, there is a fourth view, referred to as bil-waqf, *noncommittal.*[14]

What is intended here is that no one could say of the Arabs—nor for that matter of any nation in the entire world—that a group of scholars met together and established all the words to be found in their language, then proceeded to use those

[13] Abu ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī, Muḥammad Ibn al-Wahhāb (?–916 A.D.), was a famous Muʿtazilite scholar. [*Al-Fihrist,* p. 1025.]

[14] Certain Muslim scholars, especially those of the tenth century, who dealt with the topic of mabdaʾ al-lughah, *the origin of language,* have identified several theories. The "naturalist theory" claims that language has its origin in a munāsaba ṭabīʿīya, *natural affinity,* between expression and the things they signify. The "conventionalist theory" claims that language origin is based on social convention. The third theory, which Orthodox Muslims favor the most, is called the "revelationist theory." It is based on the idea that language was originally revealed to man by Allah. The fourth theory is waqf, *noncommittal,* which states that neither the conventionalist nor the revelationist theories can really stand alone. Therefore, both of those theories must have equal possibilities. The essence of this footnote, concerning the origin of language, is based on Bernard G. Weiss, "Medieval Muslim Discussions of the Origin of Language," *ZDMG,* 1974:33–41.

words after setting them down in such a fashion. Rather, what is known and what has been passed down by successive numerous sources is that the words of the language have been used with the meanings that people meant to convey by them. And if anyone claims that he is aware of words having been established in the language prior to their use, he is mistaken, since such a claim has never been transmitted on any authority. Nor is it said: "We know this is so for if no words are established beforehand, then no use may be made of them." To this it is said : "Such is not the case. Rather, we know that Allah has inspired the animals with sounds through which they may communicate with each other." This has been referred to as manṭiq, *language,* and qawl, *speech,* as in Solomon's saying: ". . . We were taught the language of the birds . . ." (27:16). It is also found in Allah's saying: ". . . One of the ants said: 'Oh, you ants, enter your abodes . . .'" (27:18); and ". . . Oh, you mountains and birds! Echo the praises of Allah with him [David] . . ." (34:10). The same is true of human beings. For the child, after he begins to distinguish among sounds, if he hears his parents or whoever is raising him pronounce a word, will point to the object being referred to, since he has come to understand that this word is used to express a particular meaning. That is to say, the person who used the word intended to express that specific meaning. After this, the child hears one word after another until he learns the language of the people whom he has grown up among, without them having agreed with him beforehand on established words and meanings. In fact, it takes place without them having alerted him to the meanings of the words, although he may sometimes ask about what certain words refer to in order to acquaint himself with them. Similarly, an unfamiliar language may be translated for someone such that he comes to know the meanings of some of its words, whereas if he lived among the speakers of the language for a period of time, he would learn these meanings without anyone pointing them out to him.

Of course, people may designate a name for something that comes into existence for the first time and that, for this reason, no one was familiar with before. For example, a son might be born to someone, after which he gives the child a name, either after someone else, or one that has been improvised. Moreover, a person or object named may be unique, the name not having been agreed upon by more than one person; or people may happen to refer to the entity by the same name. Similarly, someone might manufacture an instrument, write a book, or build a city, then give it a name, since it does not belong to any known class such that it would

have an agreed upon name in the common language. Allah says: "The Most Gracious One; Who taught the Qur'ān; He created man; He taught him intelligent speech" (55:1–4); and "... They say 'Allah has given us speech Who gives speech to everything ...'" (41:21); and "Who created, then disposed; Who measured then guided" (87:2–3). Thus, Allah inspires human beings with speech just as He does other creatures. Moreover, if Allah taught Adam all names and presented all entities named to the Angels as He states in the Qur'ān, then we know that He did not teach Adam all the languages that all people would ever speak until the Day of Resurrection. Rather, these languages would be spoken by his progeny after him. For they [Adam's descendants] speak nothing but their own languages, and to claim otherwise is a patent falsehood. For Adam (pbuh) could only pass on his own language to his children. However, in the year of the great flood, Allah caused all of Adam's progeny to drown except for those who were in the ark; and the progeny of all those in the ark were cut off, except for Noah's sons, but they did not speak all the languages that would be spoken by nations after them. For even a single language, such as Farsi, Arabic, Latin, or Turkish, contains within it so many differences and variations that only Allah Himself could count them. Among the Arabs themselves, each tribe has a lughah, *dialect,* that others may not understand. This being the case, it is inconceivable that all these languages and dialects could have been passed down from those who were in the ark when they left no offspring behind. Rather, the offspring who survived were those of Noah and all those who were descended from his three sons: Sām, Ḥām, and Japheth. Allah says: "And we have caused his offspring to survive" (37:77). In other words, Allah allowed no one to survive but his [Noah's] offspring. As has been recorded by Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh): "His sons are three in number," and of course these three sons could not have spoken all the languages of the world so that they could be traced back to them. For those who know one language will generally not be familiar with another. And if those who passed on such languages were only three in number, then they taught their children, and their children in turn taught their children, and if this had been the case, there would have been continuity. However, we find that even among the descendants of a single father, one tribe will speak a dialect that is incomprehensible to other tribes. Nor would we say that this father taught one of his sons one language while he taught his other son another. For a father may only have two sons, while the languages spoken by his offspring far outnumber these two sons.

And by virtue of the way Allah created them, human beings generally teach their children the language in which they speak to them, or the language that others use in addressing them. As for languages that Allah did not create speakers for, then of course no one teaches these to his children. In addition, there are human beings who utter words they have never heard from anyone else. On the authority of the pious ancestors, learned scholars from among the commentators and others take two different views regarding the names that [Allah] taught to Adam.

According to the first of these views, Allah taught Adam only the names of rational beings. This view is based on Allah's statement in the Qur'ān: ". . . Then He presented them to the Angels . . ." (2:31). Those who hold this view say that the object pronoun used in this verse (i.e., hum, *them*) may only be used to refer to rational beings. If reference were being made to nonrational beings, the pronoun employed would have been hā, *it* or *them,* rather than hum. For this reason, Abu al-ʿĀliyah says that Allah taught Adam the names of the Angels, since at that time, the only rational beings in existence were the Angels. Iblīs had not yet separated from the other Angels nor did he have any offspring. Another interpretation of this verse, held by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Zayd Ibn Aslam, is that Allah taught Adam the names of his progeny. This is consistent with the ḥadith narrated by al-Tirmidhī on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh), which says: "Adam asked his Lord to show him images of his descendants who would be prophets. When he saw them, raʾā fīhim man yabuṣṣu, *he saw one of them shining.* He then asked: 'Lord, who is that?' To which Allah replied: 'He is your son Dāʾūd [David].'" Hence, Allah revealed to Adam images of some of his descendants as well as their names, in which case the names Allah taught him were proper names rather than common names.

According to the second majority view Allah taught Adam the names of everything. Among those who hold this view are Ibn ʿAbbās and his followers. According to Ibn ʿAbbās, Allah taught Adam even words such as al-faswah, *the noiseless emission of wind from the anus,* and al-fusayyah, the diminutive form of al-faswah, as well as al-qaṣʿah and al-quṣayʿah, *the large intestine* and *the small intestine.* In other words, He even taught abstract and concrete nouns, including their regular and diminutive forms. Evidence for this view is found in the two collections of sound ḥadiths, according to which the Prophet (pbuh) said in the "ḥadith of intercession": "People say: 'Oh, Adam, you are the father of humankind. Allah created you with His own hand, then breathed into you His

spirit and taught you the names of all things.'" Likewise Allah's saying, al-ʾasmāʾa kullahā, *all names,* has a comprehensive, distinct reference that cannot be particularized. This is also true of His saying: "He presented them to the Angels," in which the pronoun hum, *them,* includes both rational and nonrational creatures, with the rational predominating. Allah says: ". . . For among them there are those who creep on their stomachs, those who walk on two legs, and those who walk on all four . . ." (24:45). According to ʿIkrimah, Allah taught Adam the names of classes, without the names of their particular members. For example, one might say human, jinn, angel, and bird. And according to Muqātil, Ibn al-Sāʾib, and Ibn Qutaybah, Allah taught Adam the names of riding animals, reptiles, and birds that He created on earth.

Further evidence for the view that these languages have not been passed down from Adam may be found in the fact that most languages lack elements found in Arabic. For example, they do not have special names for children, houses, sounds, and other concepts that are ascribed to animate beings; in fact, they only use the iḍāfah, *annexation,* in order to express such names and concepts. For if Allah had taught Adam all names, He would have taught them to him proportionally in correspondence to each other. We also find that every nation that lacks a holy book also lacks words in its language for the days of the week; rather, its language contains only words for day, month, and year, which may be discerned through intuition and reason. Thus, such nations have assigned names to the concepts of day, month, and year, since the expression of something always follows a mental conception of it. As for the concept of the week, it was only recognized through hearing a revealed message. That is, it only came to be known, through the reports of the prophets, that Allah created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six days, then sat down upon the throne, who established legislation according to which people were to gather one day every week in order to worship Allah and to remember that very first week during which Allah began to create this world. Hence, names for the days of the week exist in the languages of the Arabs, the Hebrews, and those to whom their languages have been passed down, whereas they are not found in the languages of the Turks and others, since they did not recognize this concept. Thus it has come to be known that Allah has inspired the human race to express through words those things that they desire and conceive. The first person taught this was Adam, and other human beings have been taught just as he was, albeit in different languages. For Allah sent His

revelation to Moses in Hebrew and to Muḥammad in Arabic, but in both cases what was revealed was the speech of Allah. In this way Allah has made clear what He desires and requires of human beings, even though one language is distinct from the other. Nevertheless, Hebrew is among the closest of all languages to Arabic; in fact, it bears a closer resemblance to Arabic than that found between other languages.

In sum, our purpose is not to prove the nonexistence of the matter mentioned above. Rather, it is sufficient to say that it is not known whether it exists or not. In fact ilhām, *inspiration,* is a sufficient basis for an expression to come into existence in languages without having been established beforehand. And if this may be called learning through experience, let it be called so. Thus, whoever claims that all categories and classes are laid down somehow before they are used in languages, has spoken ignorantly. Rather what is known with certainty is actual usage. Some also say that literal usage is distinguished from figurative usage on the basis of whether one can discern the meaning of a word without the aid of a surrounding context. That is, if a word clearly expresses a certain meaning even when used in isolation, then we have a literal usage; whereas if the meaning of the word only becomes manifest through the al-qarīnah, *context,* then we have a figurative usage. This issue is related to the use of a word within a given meaning, but has nothing to do with the matter of establishing words in a language prior to their usage.

It has also been said that the division of linguistic usage into figurative and literal has no basis in reality, for there is no criterion on which to base the distinction, which renders it meaningless. It is a distinction promoted by those who have no understanding of what they are saying, so that they are introducing illegitimate innovations into the law and are flouting both reason and common sense. For they have said that literal usage refers to a word used with the same meaning with which it was originally established, while figurative usage refers to the use of a word to convey a meaning other than that with which it was originally established. However, in order to justify this division, they must demonstrate that in fact words are established with particular meanings prior to their usage, which is difficult indeed. They then go further to divide literal usage into two types: lughawiyyah, *linguistic,* and ʿurfiyyah, *conventional,* though most of them divide it into three types: linguistic, conventional, and sharʿiyyah, *legal.*

Conventional literal usage refers to words that have come to signify what they do, not by virtue of the language per se, but by virtue of accepted practice or convention. The signification of the word might at times be more general than its strictly linguistic meaning, while at other times it may be more specific. Moreover, the conventional and linguistic meanings may actually be different from one another, although they are related in some manner because of which, the same word was employed to convey two disparate meanings. An example of the first case would be the words "neck," "head," and the like—words that were originally employed to refer specifically to a particular member of the body, and that often came to be used to refer to the entire body. The second case pertains to a word like dābbah, *a riding animal,* such as a horse, mule, or donkey. This word originally was used to refer to any creature that crept along the ground (since the word dabba means to *creep* or *crawl*); then it came to be used by some people to refer to animals that walk on four legs and by others to refer specifically to a mare or a donkey. The third case includes words such as ghā'iṭ, *feces,* and ẓaʿīnah, *riding camel.* The word ghā'iṭ, for example, in the Arabic language originally referred to a low-lying area where people would go to dispose of bodily wastes; eventually, the same word came to be applied to the bodily wastes themselves, by association with the place where they had "come out." The word ẓaʿīnah was originally used to refer to a riding animal, and specifically a camel for riding, after which people came to apply the same word to the woman who rides on the camel's back on a litter.

The point to be stressed here is that this type of conventional literal usage did not come into existence because a particular group of people decided to introduce it into the language. Rather, some speakers of the language simply began to use a particular word to convey a meaning that had come to be understood through conventional practice. Through this usage the word then took on this particular meaning as the usage became more widespread. For this reason, the literal usages of many words in a given language have been expanded over time. In fact, a word's meaning based on conventional usage may come to be more widely recognized than its original linguistic signification, so that when used in an absolute manner, the word evokes not its original meaning, but rather the meaning it has acquired through conventional usage. In such a case, the word's literal meaning based on convention actually abnegates the meaning it originally conveyed in the language. Moreover, this literal meaning came into being without

any establishment of its signification prior to its use; hence, appeal to such a prior establishment of the meanings of words is not valid.

If they say: What we mean by a word's original coining or creation is that for which it was first used, we would reply by asking: How can one know for certain that the words that the Arabs were using to communicate with before and at the time the Qurʾān was revealed had not been used previously to convey different meanings? For if they are not certain that such words were not used differently at a previous time, then neither is it possible to know whether they bear a literal meaning, which is in conflict with what they have agreed upon. Moreover, it follows necessarily from this that one can never state with certainty that any given word is being used literally, which no sensible person would accept. We also might find that someone who has taken the above position encounters words that he does not know to have been used in any but a conditioned sense. He then utters them in an entirely absolute sense, then claims that this represents their literal meanings without knowing that he has stripped them of all restrictions, whereas originally, they had been restricted. For example, one might say that the literal meaning of "eye" is the organ of sight. Following this, the word ʿayn, *eye,* might be used in phrases such as ʿayn al-s͟hams, *the eye of the sun,* al-ʿayn al-nābiʿah, *the flowing spring,* or ʿayn al-d͟hahab, *choicest gold,* to express some aspect of resemblance or comparison. However, the majority view is to consider this not as an example of literal versus figurative usage but rather of common features among different entities, such that they are likened to one another. The word raʾs, *head,* for example, is said to be used literally in the ph rase raʾs al-ʾinsān, *the person's head.* It may also be used in other phrases with figurative meanings: for example, raʾs al-darb, *the head of the road,* to mean its beginning; raʾs al-ʿayn, *the head of the spring,* to mean its source; raʾs al-qawm, *the head of the tribe,* to mean its chief; raʾs al-ʾamr, *the head of the matter or issue*; raʾs al-s͟hahr, raʾs al-ḥawl, *the head of the month or year,* to mean their beginnings, and other such phrases through figurative usage. However, one finds nowhere here that the word raʾs, *head,* is used in isolation, stripped of all restrictions. Rather, it has been used with restrictions, even when it refers to the human head. Allah says: ". . . rub your heads and [wash] your feet up to the ankles . . . (5:6). This restriction prevents other meanings from being read into the word.

Thus if one says, 'the head of the spring,' 'the head of the road,' 'the head of the people,' 'the head of the matter,' and so forth, then each restricted phrase is

distinguished from every other one in the overall meaning it conveys. However, all these phrases share a common feature, as do various nouns that are all qualified by the definite article. Moreover, if it is assumed that the speaker utters the phrase 'the person's head' first—since one tends to conceptualize his own head before any other type of head, and since one generally expresses first that which he first conceptualized—then the use of this possessive construction initially does not preclude the use of the same word (i.e., head) later in another possessive construction. Nor is this construction a type of figurative usage. If one said, for example, 'the son of Adam' first, then later said, 'the son of the mare' or 'the son of the donkey,' this would not necessarily convey figurative meaning. Likewise if we said, 'the man's daughter,' we would not be speaking figuratively if we were to say, 'the mare's daughter;' and if we first said, 'the man's head,' we would not be engaging in figurative usage if we said, 'the mare's head.' The same would apply to possessive constructions such as "his hand" or "his foot."

If it were said: The meaning is literal when the word is used in a possessive construction with an animal, we would reply: Considering this construction to be literal makes no more sense than ascribing to the use of the word 'head' in a possessive construction with 'person.' Moreover, a word might be placed in such a construction with small animals that would not even occur to most speakers of the language. And if one claims that the usage is literal in this case, then why would it not likewise be literal in expressions such as 'the head of the mountain,' 'the head of the road,' or 'the head of the spring'? The same could be said of other things that are placed in a possessive construction with human beings, such as the parts of the body, one's children, and one's dwellings, which may be placed in the same type of construction with nonhuman beings, including inanimate objects. For example, one can say: 'the head of the mountain,' 'the head of the spring,' 'the nose (i.e., the spur) of the mountain,' 'the mouth of the riverbed,' 'the stomach (i.e., the interior, or lower portion) of the riverbed,' 'the back (i.e., the top, or upper portion) of the mountain,' 'the belly of the earth,' 'the back (i.e., the surface) of the earth,' and so on. These are used with the alif,[15] which is the duality of the al-ẓāhir, *outward,* and the al-bāṭin, *inward,* seen in many things. The meaning in all uses is that the outward is that which is apparent and manifest, while the inward is that which is hidden or unseen. Hence a man's ẓahr al-ʾinsān,

[15] Here "the alif" refers to the definite article.

back, is called such because it is visible, or easily seen; while a person's baṭn al-ʾinsān, *stomach,* is called thus because it is internal and unseen. Hence if one said: This is literal, and that is figurative, it would make just as much sense to say the opposite. There are also nouns that speakers of a language commonly use in the singular, such as 'person' or al-ʾinsān, *man.* It may also be qualified by a possessive construction, as in the expressions ʾinsān al-ʿayn, *the pupil of the eye,* and ʾibrat al-d͟hirāʿ, *the tip of the arm.* And assuming that linguistic usage includes both figurative and literal, some have claimed that the constructions just mentioned are figurative, which is incorrect. For figurative usage refers to the use of a word to convey a meaning other than that with which it was originally associated. Here, however, the word has not been 'used' in this manner; rather, it has been compounded with another word, which has placed it in a new association or, one might say, caused a new word to be coined by virtue of the iḍāfah, *annexation.* Hence, if a word were used in a construct phrase with a particular meaning, then appeared in the same construct phrase with a different meaning, this would indeed be a figurative usage. The place names Baʿlabak and Ḥaḍramawt, for example, are both compound words in which two words placed in a construct phrase were combined to create one new word. However, no one says that they represent figurative uses of language. For as long as these names are used solely in a construct phrase, it is more fitting not to consider them figurative uses of a language.

Mention has been made of those who distinguish between literal and figurative usages by saying that in literal usage, the meaning is conveyed without the aid of a surrounding context; whereas in figurative usage, the meaning is understood only through the surrounding context. Or they may say that a literal usage involves the use of a word in an absolute, unrestricted sense; whereas a figurative usage conveys the intended meaning only through restrictions on the word. Or, some say that the literal meaning is that which springs to mind when a word is used in an absolute sense; whereas the figurative meaning does not readily come to mind when the word is employed in this manner. Still another might say that figurative meaning may legitimately be denied, whereas literal meaning may not.

In response, one might just ask: What is meant by a word's being accompanied by, or stripped of, a surrounding context? If what is meant by "context" is the surrounding words—as, for example, when a noun is used together with a construct phrase or is accompanied by a definite article, or is restricted by virtue

of its being a subject or object of a verb, or the subject or predicate of a nominal sentence—then there is virtually no noun in connected speech that is not conditioned by a context. The same applies to verbs; for if one means by its being conditioned by a context that it must have a subject, or that it may be conditioned by a direct object, or adverbs describing time, place, purpose, or compliment objects of accompaniment and circumstance, then a verb is never used in an absolute manner. In the case of particles, the same principles apply even more forcefully, since a particle is used precisely because of the meaning of some other word in the utterance. Hence, generally speaking, there is no noun, verb, or particle in any complete utterance that is used without some restrictions that preclude its being understood in an absolute sense. Hence, if the context is what prevents a word from being understood in an absolute, unrestricted sense, then there is no word whatsoever in the language that people speak that is free from all restrictions. This is true whether the Arabic sentence in question is nominal or verbal. Therefore, both in Arabic and other languages, the single word has always been used within a conditioned context, namely, the complete sentence, be it a nominal, verbal, or exclamatory sentence—that is, if the vocative sentence is to be considered a third category.

As for the abstract noun, verb, or particle that occurs because of a meaning that is neither a noun nor a verb, this has never been called a word in the speech of the Arabs; rather, calling this a kalimah, *word,* is simply a grammatical term. For example, one category of words has been labeled fiʿl, *verb,* which they [the grammarians] divided into past tense verbs, present tense verbs, and commands. However, Arabic speakers never placed such labels on words; rather, such appellations were agreed upon by grammarians, who named a given type of word on the basis of the meaning it conveyed. A word expressing the idea of a fiʿl, *action,* occurring in the past was called a fiʿl māḍin, *past tense verb,* and so it was for other types of words. Whenever the term kalimah, *word,* appears in the Qur'ān or the ḥadiths—or for that matter in any of the Arabs' speech, be it poetry or prose—what is intended is the meaningful linguistic unit referred to by grammarians as the complete sentence. An example may be seen in the following Qur'ānic verses. Allah says: "And to warn those who say 'Allah has begotten a son.' No knowledge have they of such a thing nor had their fathers. Mighty is the word that comes out of their mouths. They utter nothing but a lie" (18:4–5); and ". . . And may the word of those who disbelieve the lowermost, while it was the

Word of Allah that became the uppermost . . ." (9:40); and ". . . Come to a word that is just between us and you . . ." (3:64); and "And he made it a Word lasting among his offspring . . ." (43:28); and ". . . And made them stick to the word of piety and they were well entitled to it and worthy of it . . ." (48:26); and the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "The most truthful word ever uttered by a poet is that of Labīd, who said: 'Indeed, everything apart from Allah is falsehood and futility.'" The Prophet also said: "There are two words that are light on the tongue but weighty in the balance, and precious to the Most Merciful One: Praise be to Allah and Praise be to Allah Almighty!" He also said: "A man who speaks a word pleasing to Allah does not suspect where his word will lead him, but through it Allah shall decree His favor toward him until the Day of Resurrection. A man who speaks a word evoking Allah's displeasure likewise does not suspect where his word will lead him, but through it Allah shall decree His wrath against him until the Day of Resurrection." Similarly he states: "I have uttered four words after you which, were they weighed against what I have said from today onward, would be ranked as follows: Praise be to Allah for the number of His creatures, praise be to Allah for the weightiness of His throne, praise be to Allah for His soul's good pleasure, praise be to Allah for the ink in which His words are inscribed!" Thus, if every noun, verb, and particle found in the language occurs with some sort of restriction, then it is not permissible to say of the term 'literal' that it refers to the meaning conveyed by a word that is used in an absolute sense, stripped of all surrounding context.

If someone were to say that he was speaking of some contexts and not others, then one would reply by asking him to specify the distinction between those contexts that accompany a literal usage, and those that accompany a figurative usage. However, he would not be able to provide any sort of sound, reasonable division between these two alleged contexts. Evidence for what is said may be seen in the fact that people disagree concerning something with general meaning that is then used with a more specific meaning. Is its use then literal or figurative? Likewise in the case of the words lafẓ al-ʾamr, *command,* if they are used to mean al-nadb, *mandate* or *commissioning,* is this an example of literal or figurative meaning? Concerning this question two opinions have been held by most sects: the followers of Aḥmad (Ibn Ḥanbal) hold two different views, as do the followers of al-Shāfiʿī and Mālik.

There are those who believe that this dispute has to do with contiguous specification, such as that found in the use of adjectives, conditionals, and words expressing purpose and apposition. Concerning this someone has related the views of those who make a distinction. For example, a group of scholars who have composed works on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence. However, this is a view that no one is known to have taken; that is, no one is known to have considered a general word that has been conditioned with adjectives, purposes, and conditions to be figurative. The person relating this view believed that it applied to contiguous specification, whereas thinkers, such as those mentioned above, were only dealing with a general word made more specific through a noncontiguous word or phrase. In the case of a contiguous word or phrase, however, they do not refer at all to a general word made specific, for the contiguity prevents it from being general to begin with. This is a view shared by many religious scholars; moreover, it is the correct view. It cannot be said that what has been restricted by a condition or an adjective is included within general terms that have been rendered specific. Rather, thus when it is conditioned, it is said to be a contiguous specification, which is not included within absolute specification.

In general it may be said that if the above situation is an example of usage, then the qualification of a verb by a direct object, or by an adverb of place, time, or manner will be considered to have figurative meaning as well, as would anything, for that matter, that was conditioned in any way. In this case, however, virtually all speech would have to be considered figurative. And if this were the case, what room would be left for literal meaning?

One might claim that a distinction is to be made between contiguous and noncontiguous contexts such that a word accompanied by a contiguous context has a literal meaning, whereas a word accompanied by a noncontiguous context is figurative. To such a person one might reply: By "contiguous" do you mean that which is contained in the word itself, or what was in existence at the time it was spoken? If by it you mean what is contained within the word itself, then what is known about the state of the speaker or the listener must then be considered the noncontiguous context. For example, the definite article would be used with those things that are known to both the speaker and the listener, as with the Prophet (pbuh) because he is known to Muslims as the Messenger of Allah, and we say al-Ṣiddīq, *the Truthful One,* to refer to the Caliph Abu Bakr. And if someone said to his friend: "Go to the Amir, the Judge, or the Governor," he would use the definite

article to indicate that both he and his friend are familiar with the person to whom reference is being made. Moreover, this is said to be an example of figurative speech. Likewise, a pronoun is used to refer back to a known entity that is not mentioned, as, for example, when Allah says: "Indeed We have revealed It [the Qurʾān] . . ." (98:1) and ". . . until it [the sun] was hidden in the veil [of the night]" (38:32). But no one claims that these are examples of figurative speech. Moreover, if one says of a valiant person: "This lion did such and such today," or to a dull-witted person: "This donkey said such and such today," or of a learned or a generous individual: "This sea [of knowledge] expounded on such and such a topic today," then in all such cases what we have is literal usage, since the word is accompanied by a qarīnah lafẓiyyah, *verbal context,* such that there remains no possibility of it being figurative.

Someone might say that contiguous contexts are more general or comprehensive than this, including within them the situation existing at the time a statement was made. To this one might reply: This view places you in an even more difficult position than before. For anyone who speaks figuratively must accompany what he says with the surrounding situation that clarifies what he means to say, since otherwise it would not be possible to speak figuratively.

Someone might say: I deem it permissible to delay the elucidation [of the intended meaning] until such time as this is needed. To this one might reply that most people do not deem it permissible for someone to utter a word that conveys a particular meaning when he does not intend that meaning, unless his intent is obvious. However, they do deem it acceptable for one to delay the elucidation of the meaning that was not conveyed by the word, such as mujmalāt, *general concepts.* We also declare that if you permit the declaration [of the intended meaning] to be delayed, then this elucidation may occur within a complete sentence, through acts of the Messenger [of Allah] or in some other way. Thus, this delayed clarification would stand alone, without needing to be accompanied by anything else. Hence, if you consider this to be figurative speech, then that which requires elucidation in order to become effective, as it were, must also necessarily be figurative. Allah says: "Take ṣadaqah, *alms,* from their wealth in order to purify and sanctify them with it . . ." (9:103).

Someone might say: Now, even supposing such a thing to be logically possible, it is nevertheless not found in Islamic law and everything that has been mentioned

with regard to it is false. For there are those who claim that in the case of an expression whose actual meaning is not apparent on the surface, the elucidation of the actual meaning may be delayed. Such people support their position by referring to Allah saying: ". . . Allah commands that you sacrifice a cow . . ." (2:67). They claim that the cow mentioned in this verse was actually a specific cow, though its specification was not revealed until later. However, this is contrary to what has been reported in detail on the authority of the pious ancestors, such as the Companions and their Successors, to the effect that they commanded the people to slaughter a baqarah muṭlaqah, *unspecified cow.* And if they had taken one of their cows and slaughtered it, then they would have been rewarded for their action. But instead they were steadfast with their opinion, so Allah was severe with them. The reference made in the verse is indefinite, since the statement has no restrictions placed upon it. Moreover, the Qur'ānic context indicates that Allah condemns them for asking what particular cow was meant, whereas if what was commanded had been specified, they would not have been considered blameworthy. Moreover, such a thing never happened before with respect to the commands of Allah or His Messenger. That is, it had never happened that Allah commanded His servants to do a specific thing, then proceeded to render the command incomprehensible to them time and time again rather than mentioning, from the beginning, those distinguishing features by which it could be identified. It has been argued that Allah delays the clarification of terms such as 'prayer,' 'zakah' and 'pilgrimage,' and that such terms had meanings in the common language that differed from those found in Islamic law. However, this claim is incorrect; for Allah only commands the people to perform ritual prayers after they are familiar with what they mean, and the same applies to zakah and pilgrimage. Allah never delays the elucidation of any of the commands He gives to believers. This entire issue has been treated elsewhere as well.

As for the claim that literal meaning is that which first springs to mind when a term is used in an absolute sense, it is utterly groundless. It is claimed that if a word is used only in a conditioned sense, then what first comes to mind in every situation in which it is used is whatever meaning is indicated in that particular situation. If, on the other hand, the term is said to be used in an absolute manner, it must be remembered that no word is ever used in people's speech in an entirely absolute way; hence, in such a case it makes no sense even to ask whether something comes readily to mind or not.

It also must be asked: What "mind" is being referred to here? What first springs to the mind of the Arab who understands the Arabic language will not be the same thing that first comes to mind of the Nabaṭean[16] who has come to use certain [Arabic] words to convey meanings they did not originally bear. And herein lies an error that has been made by many people. For they have grown accustomed to words being used to convey certain meanings, whether in the speech of the common people among whom they live or that of the learned. If they then hear these same words being used in the Qur'ān or the ḥadiths, they assume that the words are being used to convey the same meanings to which they have grown accustomed, and they interpret the words of Allah and His Messenger in accordance with their knowledge of the Nabaṭean language [dialect] and their present customs. And this is among the things that have introduced error into various sects. Hence, we are duty bound to be familiar with the language, customs, and conventions that were set down in the Qur'ān and in the Sunnah [words and deeds] of the Prophet. We also need to know how the Companions understood such terms when they were used by the Prophet. For it was through their language, customs, and conventions that they were spoken to by Allah and His Messenger—not through realities that came into existence at a later time.

Moreover, as we have shown elsewhere, there is no part of the Qur'ān or the ḥadith that Allah and His Messenger have not made clear to their hearers and readers such that they would need some other source of information to elucidate their meanings. It has also become clear that what some people speak of as a word that is used in an absolute sense, without any restrictions, does not exist in outward speech, but only in the mind of the speaker or the hearer, just as what logicians refer to as an abstract concept free of all restrictions has no existence outside the

[16] Historically the Nabaṭean people lived and ruled in Petra until approximately 105 A.D. There were two major branches of Nabaṭeans, the Nabaṭ of al-Shām (Syria) and the Nabaṭ of al-ʿIrāq. The Nabaṭeans were known to be people of agriculture and are credited with developing the Arabic writing system that the Arabs inherited and developed further. Later on, the term "Nabaṭean" applied to mixed people who spoke a vernacular form of Arabic that did not adhere to the strict rules of literary Arabic. This is the dialect that Ibn Taymiyyah refers to as al-Lughah al-Nabaṭiyyah, *the Nabaṭī language or dialect.* A form of poetry that does not adhere to the strict rules of literary Arabic, known as al-Shiʿr al-Nabaṭī, was found primarily in Arabia and is still popular today. For more information see *The Rise of the North Arabic Script and its Ḳur'ānic Development, With a Full Description of the Ḳur'ān Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute* by Nabia Abbott, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938; "Nabaṭ" by D. F. Graf and T. Fahd and; "Nabaṭī by P. G. Emery. *EI* 2, vol. 7, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992, pp. 831–38.

human mind. Likewise it may be said that the division of knowledge into taṣawwur, *imagination,* and taṣdīq, *assent,* where imagination is the naive conceptualization of meaning free from all restrictions, does not exist. Nor do the simple, absolute baṣā'ṭ, *elements,* that go to make up classes and categories. As for their claim that at the foundation of being there must necessarily be an absolute existence unrestricted by any affirmed matter, it is false. For such abstract, absolute properties must be known to the person who looks into these sciences, and because of the supposition that they in fact exist, some sects have gone astray into rational and perceptual concepts. Rather, if scholars of Islam refer to "absolute" and "conditioned" entities, they mean that a particular entity either is or is not conditioned by a particular restriction. For example, they say that the word "neck" is used in an absolute sense in the "verse of atonement through an oath" but conditioned in the "verse of killing." That is, it is free of the restriction that would be placed on it by belief. For otherwise the verse would have read ". . . freeing of a neck . . ." (4:92), thereby being described as a single neck that exists and that can be set at liberty. As for those who argue for the possibility of an utterly absolute entity, they say that such an entity is neither described as being one or many, as existing or as not existing, nor as possessing any other qualities. Rather, it is considered to be reality in and of itself. This notion is mentioned by al-Rāzī, who adopted it from Ibn Sīnā and other would-be philosophers. Elsewhere we have treated the subjects of absolute and conditioned uses of language, universals and particulars, and so on, and have elucidated the errors of thinkers such as those mentioned above.

What is meant here is the use of a word that is free from all restrictions, which, as we have asserted above, does not exist. Hence, no one utters any type of word but that it is conditioned in some manner and integrally connected with other words in the utterance, such that these restrictions render it impossible for one to understand or use the word in utter isolation. It has also become clear that someone who distinguishes between literal and figurative uses of language has no reasonable basis for such a distinction. It follows likewise that there is no word in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah whose meaning is not elucidated by some sort of restriction, nor do these books contain any words that are used figuratively. Rather, they are to be understood in their entirety as bearing literal meaning. Thus, when many later Muslim thinkers claimed that the Qur'ān contained figurative speech and cited Qur'ānic verses to support their claim, their opponents were able

to refute their claims employing the very same verses. One of the best-known verses cited is: "... A wall on the point of falling down ..." (18:77). Commenting on this verse they said: A wall is not a living being, and therefore cannot be possessed of a will; therefore, the use of the word irādah, *will,* here in reference to the condition of the wall must be figurative. To this we would reply that the word irādah, *will,* has been used to refer to the kind of propensity that is accompanied by awareness and feeling, namely, the propensity or inclination of a living entity; but it has also been used to describe propensities that involve no feeling or consciousness, namely, those of an inanimate object. This is a well-known and widespread use of language. One might say, for example, 'This roof wants to fall down;' 'This ground needs to be plowed up;' 'This plant needs to be watered;' 'This fruit is ready to be picked;' 'This robe needs to be washed;' and the like.

If a word is used to convey two or more meanings, then it will either be considered literal with respect to one of the two meanings and figurative with respect to the other, or each of them may be considered literal with respect to the element that is specific to it alone. In the latter case we have two meanings that are expressed by a single word. Or one might say that each use of the word is literal with respect to the element that is common to both meanings. These are nouns that share some common universal property, and nouns that refer to a general class or category. The first must be considered figurative, while the second must be considered to participate in a common universal meaning, with both of them differing from the original usage or meaning such that they both are seen as sharing in a common universal. On this basis one may recognize the common basis of all nouns describing classes or categories. Otherwise, if someone said that when the word "will" is used to refer to the propensity of an inanimate object, it is used literally, whereas if it refers to the propensity of a living being, it is used figuratively, then there would be no actual distinction between the two usages apart from the fact that the word "will" is used more frequently to refer to the inclinations of living creatures. It may be used in a conditioned manner, which makes clear that what is intended is a reference to the propensity of a living creature, while here it has been used with a restriction, which makes it clear that it refers to the inclination of an inanimate object. The common element among the entities referred to by nouns describing classes or categories is a comprehensive, universal concept that has no existence apart from the mind. It is this same universal concept that is the

source of the divisions among classes of things. However, this general, universal conception was something that philologists felt no need to express, since they only concern themselves with entities that have external existence. As for that which normally exists in the heart and which generally has no external existence unless it is found in conjunction with something else, it does not exist abstracted in the mind; that is, one only conceives of it in association with some other entity. This is to be contrasted with words such as "man" or "mare," which refer to entities that have independent existence outside the mind and that, for this reason, people have grown accustomed to conceptualizing without necessarily associating them with some other entity. For example, the realities referred to by terms such as 'will,' 'knowledge,' 'ability,' or 'general, absolute existence' do not exist in isolation in the mind. For such entities have no independent referents; the word "will," for example, is never used without being associated in some way with a being that does the willing, just as the word "knowledge" is used only in association with some being who does the knowing, and the word "ability" is found only in association with some entity which is 'able'. The same is true of all nonessential properties that must necessarily be associated with the entity in which and for which no words exist in the language which would allow them to be spoken of otherwise.

For in no language will you find that words such as 'blackness,' 'whiteness,' 'tallness,' or 'shortness' are used without being associated in some manner with actual entities that are black, white, tall, short, and the like. Such words occur free from any restriction only in the writings of those who classify language and its components, since they have understood what philologists mean by al-qadr al-mushtarak, *the common element,* among entities in a given class. Allah says: ". . . So Allah made it taste the garment of hunger and fear . . ." (16:112). There are those who say that the word al-dhawq, *taste,* is literal when it refers to tasting with the mouth, and that the word libās, *garment,* is literal when it refers to what is worn on the body; as for the usages of these words in the verse quoted above, they are both figurative. But this is not the case. Al-Khalīl [Ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī] once said that al-dhawq, *taste,* in the Arabic language refers to the existence of something's ṭaʿm, *taste,* which is indicated by the ways in which the word is used. Allah says: "And indeed We will make them taste the lighter punishment before the greater punishment . . ." (32:21); and "Taste this! Indeed, you are truly the mighty, the generous" (44:49); and "So that it tasted the ill effects of its conduct

. . ." (65:9); and ". . . Taste the punishment for rejecting belief" (3:106); "So you taste My punishment and My warning" (54:39); and "They will not taste therein death except the first death . . ." (44:56); and "They will not taste therein neither coolness nor [any] drink; except boiling water and a paralyzing cold" (78:24–25). Moreover, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever accepts Allah as his Lord, Islam as his religion and Muḥammad as his Messenger shall know the dhāqa taʿm al-Iman, *taste of belief.*" And in one supplication the person praying says to Allah, "allow us to taste the coolness of your pardon and the sweetness of your forgiveness!"

Hence, the word "taste" may be used to describe whatever one feels, whether it be pleasurable or painful, and whoever claims that this term pertains only to what is tasted in the mouth has made an arbitrary judgement in this regard. Rather, the use of the word "taste" to refer specifically to tasting with the mouth is always conditioned in such a way as to make clear that what is being spoken of is tasting with the mouth in particular, as when one says: "I tasted the food," or "I tasted this drink." At the same time, this word may also be used to sense what someone experiences inwardly or outwardly; this even includes the temperature of something one drinks. If, for example, a beverage were cold or hot one could say that someone had "tasted" (i.e., felt) its hotness or coldness.

The word libās, *garment,* is used to refer to anything that covers a person or with which he clothes himself. Allah says: "And We have made the night as a libās, *covering*" (78:10); and ". . . But the libās, *covering,* of righteousness, that is best . . ." (7:26); and ". . . They are libās, *covering,* for you and you are libās, *covering,* for them . . ." (2:187). Or one might say that someone had labisa al-ḥaqqa bil-bāṭil, *clothed truth with falsehood,* if he had confused one with the other until truth was "covered" or concealed and therefore unrecognizable. Or hunger may be so severe that its pain envelops the entire person, body and soul. Fear can likewise "clothe" (i.e., envelop) the entire body. Hence if one were to say that Allah causes someone to "taste" hunger and fear, this would not mean that hunger and fear had enveloped all parts of the hungry person. However, this would not be the case if one spoke of "the garment of hunger and fear," which implies a more comprehensive effect on the individual. And if someone said: "He clothed them," there would be nothing in this phrase to indicate that they had "tasted" anything painful to them except in the mind, insofar as it is known that the fearful, hungry person experiences pain. This is in contrast to the expression "tasting hunger and fear," since this phrase points to the experience of what is painful. And if the word is

used in conjunction with something pleasurable, it likewise indicates the experience of what is pleasurable. As the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever accepts Allah as his Lord, Islam as his religion, and Muḥammad (pbuh) as his Prophet shall know the taste of belief."

Someone might ask: Why has not the bliss of Paradise been described by the use of the word "taste"? The reason for this is that the word "taste" indicates the type of sensation experienced. One might say, for example, "he tasted the food," of someone who had experienced the taste of the food even though he had not necessarily eaten it. Those in Paradise, by contrast, experience a state of blessedness from which nothing is lacking, and which is not limited to tasting. In fact, the word "taste" has been negated both with respect to those in Hell and those in Paradise. It is said of those, " Nothing cool shall they taste therein, nor any drink" (78:24); that is, they are not given even a taste of these things. As for those in Paradise, it is said of them: "They will not taste therein death except the first death . . ." (44:56).

Some have claimed that the attribution of such things as al-makr, *craftiness* or *deception,* al-istihzāʾ, *derision,* and al-sukhriyyah, *scorn,* to Allah in the Qurʾān is an example of the use of figurative language. However, this is not the case. In fact, if the attitudes referred to by such words are directed toward someone who does not deserve punishment, it is an injustice to him. If, on the other hand, they are directed against someone as a punishment for similar acts or attitudes on his part, then they are just and fair. Allah says: ". . . Thus did We contrive for Joseph . . ." (12:76); that is, Allah plotted against him as his brothers had done when his father said to him: ". . . Tell not your brothers of your vision lest they plot a plot against you . . ." (12:5). Allah also says: ". . . Lo! they plot a plot [against you, Oh, Muḥammad]; And I plot a plot [against them]" (86:15–16); and "So they plotted a plot, and We plotted a plot, while they perceived not; then see how was the end of their plot! . . ." (27:50–51); and "Those who defame such of the believers who give charity voluntarily, as well as those who give according to their means, so they mock at them. Allah will throw back their mockery on them . . ." (9:79). Hence, Allah's "derision" of them deserves this very name. It has been related on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās that: "A gate into Paradise opens up before those who are in the fires of Hell. So they go scurrying toward it, only to have it close in their faces. Then another gate opens for them; once again they go rushing toward it, but it closes, and the believers laugh at them in derision." Similarly Allah says: "But

this Day those who believe will laugh at the unbelievers; on high thrones looking [at all things]. Are not the unbelievers paid for what they used to do?" (83:34–36).

It has been related on the authority of Ḥassan al-Baṣrī that: "On the Day of Resurrection the fire will die down for them just as al-ihālah, *the hot sun*,[17] dies down, so they walk along until Allah causes the earth to swallow them up." On the authority of Muqātil we read that: "A wall shall be built between them in which there is a gate. Inside the gate there is mercy, while on the outside there is torment and punishment. They remain in the darkness, then someone says to them, 'Turn back behind you, and seek light.'" Some have said that Allah's mockery of them is His way of seeking to win them over. Others have said that this is a description of how their mockery [of Allah] has caused them to fall, and how their deception and cunning has now come back on their own heads. Others have interpreted it to mean that the appearance of things in this world is the opposite of what has been concealed in the life to come. Still others have said that it refers to the way Allah has caused them to remain ignorant and to fall into error in the things they have done. All these interpretations are valid, and in all of them the derision they suffer is spoken of literally.[18]

A well-known example cited by those who affirm that figurative language is used in the Qur'ān is the verse that reads: "And ask the village . . ." (12:82). It has been said that what is meant here by qaryah, *village,* is its inhabitants. The word "village" is assumed to be occurring in the iḍāfah, *annexation,* ahl al-qaryah, *the people of the village.* The first term [ahl] of the iḍāfah is omitted, and the second

[17] Al-ihālah signifies, among the pre-Islamic Arabs, the sun goddess that they worship or the great serpent. It also signifies the sun or the hot sun. This word is derived from the verb 'alaha, *he worshiped.* See E. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon,* vol. 1, pp. 82-83, and Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab,* vol. 12, pp. 467–71.

[18] The following footnote occurs in the MI.2 edition (p. 107), upon which the Indian edition of Kitab al-Iman is based. On the margin of the Indian version the following text reads: According to some traditions which have come down to us, Allah orders that some people be brought to Paradise. Then when they have seen no glory and honor enjoyed by those who dwell there, Allah says to His Angels: "Send them away. They shall enjoy no part of it." Those being sent away then ask Allah: "Oh Lord, if you had sent us to Hell before showing us what you have shown us, our torment would have been mitigated." Allah says: "I did this because I wanted you to encounter other people with an attitude of humility. However, when you were alone, you tried to compete with Me by committing glorious feats, venerating people rather than venerating Me, and giving glory and praise to people rather than to Me. So today I will give you a taste of my grievous torment and deprive you of my generous reward." This tradition was reported by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā and others.

term [al-qaryah] assumes the meaning of the whole phrase, as in the above verse. To this one might reply that the words "village," "city," "river," "drainage pipe," and so on, contain reference both to a condition and a place in a single word. Hence, in a given use of the word, reference might be to the al-ḥāl, *condition,* namely, the inhabitants or the al-maḥall, *place.* Likewise, in the case of the word for "river" or "canal," one might say: ḥafrtu al-nahr, *I dug the canal,* referring to the place where the water flows, or jarā al-nahr, *the canal flowed*, referring to the water in it. If one says: I laid the drainage pipe, *waḍʿtu al-mizāb* reference is made to the location of the pipe, whereas if one says: the drainage pipe flowed, jarā *al-mizāb*, reference is made to the water it contains. These examples resemble the usage of the word village, *al-qaryah*, in the verse mentioned above. Allah says: "Allah sets forth an example of a village that dwells secure and content . . . " (16:112); and "How many a village have We destroyed! Our punishment came upon them at night or while they slept for their afternoon rest. When our punishment took them no cry did they utter but this: 'Indeed we did wrong'" (7:4–5); and "Did the people of the villages then feel secure against the coming of Our punishment by the night while they are asleep?" (7:97), thus referring to the inhabitants of the villages with simply the word "villages." Allah also says: "And how many a village, stronger than your village [Makkah] [Oh, Muḥammad] which has driven you out, have We destroyed and there was no help for them" (47:13); and "And these villages We have destroyed when they did wrong and We appointed a fixed time for their destruction" (18:59); and "Or the like of him who passed by a village all in ruins to its roots . . ." (2:259), referring not to the inhabitants, but to the place. However it must also be noted that this place was once inhabited, and a place is not called a village unless it was built for the purpose of being dwelt in. The word qaryah, *village,* is derived from the noun qarī, which means *collecting.* Hence one might say: qaraytu al-māʾa fil-ḥawḍ, *I collected water in the basin.*

A counterpart to this can be seen in the word insān, *person,* which includes within it references to both the body and the soul, while interpretation of the word's meaning sometimes points to one aspect and sometimes to the other. Thus, if a village's inhabitants are subjected to torment, the village itself may be said to have been destroyed, just as if a village is destroyed, it brings great torment upon its inhabitants. Whatever evil befalls one of them likewise befalls the other, and this is equally true with respect to the body and the soul. Thus, in the verses that

contain the clauses "And ask the village . . ." (12:82) and "A village which was secure . . ." (16:112), the word "village" refers to its inhabitants without assuming that any words have been omitted or implied. This interpretation, however, is based on the assumption that language includes figurative usages, of which there are none in the Qur'ān. In fact, the division of languages into literal and figurative usages is a later innovation that was never advocated by the pious ancestors. As for those who came later, they took two positions on the issue. The dispute over this question is not merely a disagreement over words; rather, it may be said that this very division is invalid, and that there is no way to distinguish between one and the other. All distinctions that have been cited in this regard have been shown to be false, and whenever anyone mentions a particular distinction, it is nullified by the next person. The situation here is similar to that of the logicians who claim that the permanent qualities that inhere in certain entities may be classified as follows: those that are internal to the entity's essence, which is stable and unchanging from without; those that are external to the entity and yet a permanent part of its essence; and permanent qualities that are necessary to the entity's existence. They thus mentioned three distinctions, all of which are false because the entire division is baseless and has nothing to do with the truth. What they have considered to be the internal qualities can be considered external, and vice-versa, as we have demonstrated elsewhere.

We have already demonstrated the falsehood of the view that if a word conveys its meaning without the aid of a surrounding context, it is to be considered a literal usage, whereas if its meaning is only conveyed with the aid of such a context, it is to be considered figurative. For there are no words that convey their meanings in isolation from surrounding contexts, nor are there any words that require all sorts of contexts without distinction. The most widely used examples to demonstrate the existence of figurative language are the words asad, *lion,* ḥimār, *donkey,* and baḥr, *sea,* and the like to describe, in a metaphoric manner, the valiant person, the dull-witted person, and a liberal, generous person, respectively. But such words are only used in a conditioned manner—that is, in conjunction with other words that qualify their meanings when they are used in a literal sense. This may also be seen in what Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq said about Abu Qatādah when someone else wanted a slain man to be despoiled: "A lion of Allah who fights on behalf of Allah and His Messenger will give you his spoils." By saying: "a lion of Allah who fights on behalf of Allah and His Messenger," he is describing him as

being strong enough to engage in jihād, *to strive in the Cause of Allah,* on [Allah's] behalf, and he has referred to him in such a specific manner that there could be no ambiguity. Similarly, the Prophet (pbuh) once said: "Khālid is a sword of Allah, which Allah has unsheathed against the polytheists."

Someone might say that verbal contexts are established by linguistic convention, and the manner in which they convey their meanings is literal, where adverbial [circumstantial] contexts are figurative. To this one might reply that a word is only used in such a way that it is conditioned by verbal contexts. However, the circumstance that reflects the state of both the speaker and the listener must be taken into consideration in all speech. For if the speaker is known, then the listener will derive from the things he says meanings that would not be apparent if the speaker were not known. For example, the listener who knows a person's customary manner of speaking will be better able to interpret what the speaker means. This is especially so since a given word conveys its meaning in a way that is conscious, intentional, and voluntary. For the speaker intends for a given word to convey a particular meaning. And if a speaker customarily employs a specific word to express a specific meaning, then this forms part of his personal "language." For this reason, whoever has paid careful attention to the words of the Prophet and what he meant by them will have come to know his customary manner of speaking, and will be able to discern more of what the Prophet intended to say than would someone else.

Therefore, if a word from the Qur'ān or a ḥadith is mentioned, one must deliberately call to mind counterparts to this particular word and what Allah and His Messenger meant by them. In this way the listener or reader may become familiar with the language peculiar to the Qur'ān and the ḥadith, and the particular manner in which Allah and His Messenger address Allah's servants. Furthermore, if the same word also has numerous parallels in the speech of others, then one can conclude that a given manner of expression is common to both the Prophet (pbuh) and his people. At the same time, however, one must not interpret the Prophet's words in light of customs or ways of speaking that came into existence only after the time of the Prophet and his Companions; this is an error into which many people have fallen. Such people may not realize that a given usage or manner of speaking was nonexistent during the time of the Prophet. And while it is permissible to employ the principle of al-qiyās, *analogy,* in the use of language,

it is not permitted when one seeks to infer or derive the meanings of words. For example, it may be permissible for someone to use a given word to convey a meaning that is comparable or similar to the meaning that the word has been used to convey before. One may do so since the word's prior meaning has become clear, notwithstanding the fact that this meaning may be subject to some dispute. However, it is not permissible for one to take up the use of words that are known to have been used to express certain meanings, then invest them with meanings that differ from those, saying that those who used these words before must have intended such and such a meaning by analogy with the meaning that he has now introduced. To so do is considered an illegitimate alteration and distortion of the language. So if someone were to say: "The neighbor is the most deserving because of his nearness," then the word jār, *neighbor,* here refers in fact to a neighbor, not to a s͟harīk, *partner,* since the latter meaning of the word was not recognized in the language at that time. At the same time, there is nothing in the word that necessitates that he merits the right of preemption; rather, it indicates that it is more fitting to sell to him. If one takes the word k͟hamr, *wine,* for example, it has been established through numerous texts and reliable transmissions of accounts that this word was originally used to refer to any muskkir, *intoxicating beverage.* Hence, the beverage we now know as nabīt͟h, *wine,* was not called 'k͟hamr' [wine or any kind of spirits] by analogy. Similarly, the habbās͟h, *graverobber,* used to be referred to merely as a sāriq, *thief.* As ʿĀʾis͟hah once said: "He who robs our dead is like the one who robs our living." As for the word lāʾṭ, *pederast,* it was considered more offensive to them than one who commits fornication with a woman. And in interpreting the Qurʾān and the ḥadith, it is imperative that one be familiar with those words that express the intent of Allah and His Messenger and know how to understand their words. For knowledge of the Arabic language with which we have been addressed, as well of the way in which words express meanings, can aid us in understanding the intent behind the words of Allah and the Prophet and can also aid us in knowing the connotation of the words and their meanings. For the majority of the errors into which heretical sects have fallen may be traced back to this area. Such sects began interpreting the words of Allah and His Messenger to mean what they themselves claimed to be their meanings, but the matter cannot be what they wished, labeling one phrase as literal and another as figurative when in fact, their entire interpretation was mistaken. An example of such an error is the way in which the Murjiʾites took the

word Iman, *belief,* to be literal when it refers to mere taṣdīq, *assent,* while claiming that it is used figuratively when it includes works.

Someone might have said [to the Murji'ites] that if the division of speech into literal and figurative is not valid, then there is no basis for their interpretation of belief, whereas if it is a valid distinction, then it is more harmful to them than it is helpful. For a word that is used literally is said to convey its meaning when employed without any restrictions or surrounding context; whereas a word used figuratively is said to convey its meaning only with the aid of an accompanying context. Moreover, it has become clear that the word 'belief,' when used in an absolute sense in the Qur'ān and in the Sunnah, includes works, and that works are excluded from it only when it is used in a conditioned sense. This in turn indicates the truth of the Prophet's saying: "Belief consists of seventy-odd branches."

As for the ḥadith of the Angel Gabriel, if what he meant by 'belief' was a condition that is associated with Islam, then so be it. For this is indubitably the meaning intended by the Prophet (pbuh). Likewise when he mentioned doing iḥsān, *perfection of (religion),* he was referring to good works along with belief and Islam. He did not intend to say that doing good can be divorced from belief and Islam. And if it were assumed that what was meant by the word "belief" was mere assent, then this would require it to be accompanied by a context, in which case it would have to be considered figurative. This is something we affirm by necessity, and which admits of no dispute once one has contemplated the Qur'ān and the ḥadith. Such, however, is not the case concerning the claim that the word "belief" in the Arabic language is a synonym for mere taṣdīq, *assent,* or the claim that the Prophet did not change or transmit the word [on someone else's authority], but rather meant to convey the same meaning that had been conveyed through it by other speakers of the language without further specification or restriction. For neither of the above claims can be affirmed with certainty. How could they be when we have ascertained the invalidity of both of them?

Moreover, the word 'belief' implies works that believers are commanded to perform, including prayer, fasting, giving zakah, and going on pilgrimage. The word 'belief' implies within itself such activities as these just as much as the words 'prayer,' 'fasting,' 'giving zakah,' and 'pilgrimage' do. This is true whether one says that the Prophet passed down the use of these words from those who

came before him or that he intended to issue a judgment without using the name, or that he used the names [of such activities], treating them in the same manner as was customary, or that he used the names in a conditioned rather than an absolute sense.

Someone might say that the effect of activities such as prayer and the pilgrimage is nullified even if they are only partially neglected. This, however, is not true of belief, since according to the Companions of the Prophet and other Orthodox Muslims, belief is not nullified merely because one has sinned. To this one might reply that by "nullification" one means that one's religious obligation is not entirely fulfilled, then likewise in the case of obligatory belief, if one neglects some part of it, then he has not fully met his religious obligations. But if by "nullification" one means the necessity of reperforming an action, then this cannot be said to apply in an absolute manner. For within the pilgrimage, for example, there are duties that, if neglected by the believer, are not to be repeated, but instead are to be atoned for with blood. So also in the case of prayer, most Muslim scholars hold that if one neglects some of one's prayer duties, either deliberately or inadvertently, then one is obliged to repeat them. That is, they are to be repeated if this is possible, otherwise they remain as an unfulfilled obligation such as attending public prayers each Friday [once the day has passed]. If, however, what one means by "nullified" is that one will not be rewarded for what he has done, then this is not the case. Rather, it has been made clear by the Prophet (pbuh), in the ḥadith pertaining to one who has committed any sort of transgression with regard to his prayer obligations, that if one does not complete his prayers, he will still be rewarded for the portion he has performed. He will not be considered like someone who has not prayed at all. There are several ḥadiths according to one's religious obligations on Resurrection Day will be brought to completion through the supererogatory acts one has performed. Hence, if religious obligations that have not been completed are rewarded on the basis of supererogatory acts, this indicates that the portions of such obligations that one has completed are reckoned in his favor. So also is the case of belief. If one neglects some aspect of it that he was obligated to perform, be it a forbidden act of which he has repented or a duty he has not performed and therefore not fulfilled his obligation with respect to it, he is still rewarded for the part he has fulfilled, as is the case with all other required acts of worship. Moreover, texts of [the Qurʾān and the ḥadith] indicate

that whoever has in his heart an atom's weight of belief shall be delivered from the fires of Hell.

On this topic the Murji'ites have departed from what is clearly taught in the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the sayings of the Prophet's Companions and their Successors. Instead they rely on their own opinions and the interpretations, at which they have arrived based on their understanding of language, which is the same approach followed by heretical sects. For this reason the Imām Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] used to say: "Most errors that people commit have to do with allegorical interpretations and the application of the principle of analogy."

For this reason we find that the Muʿtazilites, the Murji'ites, the Rāfiḍites, and other heretical sects interpreted the Qur'ān on the basis of their own opinions, what they themselves found to be reasonable, and conclusions that they reached concerning language. Therefore you will find that they did not rely on the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh), his Companions, their Successors, or Muslim leaders. For neither did they depend on the Sunnah, nor on the consensus or writings passed down by the pious ancestors. They relied on reason and language, not on the well-known books of tafsīr, *interpretation,* ḥadith, and the traditions of early Muslims; they relied rather on books of literature and scholastic theology that were the products of their own minds. This is what atheists themselves do; they take what is found in books on philosophy, literature, and language, while not paying the least attention to the Qur'ān, the ḥadith, or the writings of the pious ancestors. Such people shun the texts of the prophets since, in their view, these add nothing to knowledge. Then they interpret the Qur'ān on the basis of their own opinion and understanding without reference to the traditions that have come down from the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions. And as we have mentioned, the words of Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others have decried this approach, considering it to be no different from that of innovators and heretical thinkers.

And if one thinks carefully about their arguments, one will find them to be claims without any supporting evidence. Judge Abu Bakr al-Bāqillānī[19] expressed his agreement with the view of Jahm [Ibn Safwān] on the question of belief, thus

[19] Al-Bāqillānī, Abu Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Jaʿfar (338–403 A.H.), was a judge and a famous Ashʿarite theologian. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 7, p. 46.]

following the example of Abu al-Ḥassan al-Ash<u>sh</u>ʿarī and most of his followers. As for Abu ʿAbbās al-Callowness, Abu ʿAlī al-<u>Th</u>aqafī,[20] and Abu ʿAbd Allah Ibn Mujāhid,[21] the teacher of Judge Abu Bakr and a follower of Abu al-Ḥassan, all of them supported the doctrines of the pious ancestors. Ibn Kullāb, al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Faḍl al-Bajlī,[22] and others like them used to say: "Belief is both tasdīq, *assent,* and qawl, *a saying,*" which is in accordance with the views of Kufan jurisprudents such as Ḥammād Ibn Abī Sulaymān[23] and his followers, such as Abu Ḥanīfah and others.

[20] Al-<u>Th</u>aqafī, Abu ʿAlī Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (?–328 A.H.) was scholar of fiqh of the <u>Sh</u>āfiʿī school. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, pp. 124–25.]

[21] Abu ʿAbd Allah Ibn Mujāhid, Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad (?–370 A.H.), was a jurist of the A<u>sh</u>ʿarite school and a student of al-Bāqillānī. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 125.]

[22] Al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Faḍl al-Bajlī (?–282 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith and wrote a commentary on the Qur'ān. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 125.]

[23] Ḥammad Ibn Abī Sulaymān, Abu Ismāʿīl (?–120 A.H.), was a scholar of ḥadith and narrated ḥadith from Anas Ibn Mālik. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 125.]

Chapter Nine

The Ash'arites' and Other Sects' Opinions of Iman and A Refutation by the Author

Abu al-Ḥassan al-Ashʿarī supported Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān's view of belief, although he also supported the well-known view transmitted on the authority of the people of the Sunnah, according to which if one states, that anā muʾmin, *I am a believer,* he must add the clause, in shāʾa Allah, *if Allah wills.* This is because al-Ashʿarī supported the doctrine of the people of the Sunnah in that he did not declare any of the people of the Qiblah to be unbelievers or claim that they would remain forever in Hell. He also believed that intercession could be made on their behalf. Moreover, whenever a dispute over any matter arose between Ahl al-Ḥadith, *the People of Ḥadith,* and others, al-Ashaʿrī always supported the view held by the People of Ḥadith. At the same time, however, he was not well versed in their arguments, and for this reason he tended to support their views on the basis of principles that he himself had adopted from others, the result of which was the appearance of contradictions that were disavowed by parties on both sides of the dispute. Something similar occurred with respect to the issue of belief, in which he supported the view of Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān while at the same time supporting the position of istithānʾ, *exception,* when speaking of belief—that is, he added the conditional clause, "if Allah wills" whenever describing oneself or anyone else as having belief. On account of this he was opposed by many of his followers over the issue of exception, and we shall mention below the arguments upon which he based his view in this regard. In his acceptance of Jahm's view of belief, however, he was supported by most of his followers. Those who were only familiar with books presenting scholastic theology and who were not aware of the views of the pious ancestors and leaders of Orthodox Islam in this regard may think that the arguments they [the followers of al-Ashʿarī] cited represented the view of the people of the Sunnah, whereas in fact it is a view that was never held by any

Orthodox Muslim leader. As for Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Wakīʿ, and others, they declared all who supported Jahm's and al-Ashʿarī's views of belief to be unbelievers. To Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and his followers, Jahm's view on belief was even more odious than that of the Murjiʾites. For this reason, the Zaydites and Muʿtazilites sects, who held al-Shāfiʿī in great honor, began to challenge many of the views that were attributed to him [Abu al-Ḥassan al-Ashʿarī], saying: "Al-Shāfiʿī was neither a philosopher nor a Murjiʾite, but here we have philosophers who were both Murjiʾites and supporters of al-Ashʿarī." Their purpose in saying so was to criticize the position of the Murjiʾites, and we mention their argument because it was well known among many later thinkers who traced their views back to the Sunnah. This is the argument that serves as the basis for support of Jahm's view on belief, and both the people of the Sunnah and others have offered various answers to this question.

The Ashʿarites' Opinion of Iman as Stated by al-Bāqillānī

In the book of *al-Tamhīd,* al-Qāḍī Abu Bakr [al-Bāqillānī] said that if they said: What is belief? Say: Belief is taṣdīq, *assent,* in Allah; and it is knowledge. Assent exists in the heart. If they said: What is your evidence for this? Say: All Arab philologists agree that the meaning of belief is assent. This meaning was confirmed even before the revelation of the Qurʾān and the Message of the Prophet (pbuh). Philologists do not recognize any other meaning for Iman. This is confirmed by the saying of Allah: ". . . But you will never believe us! . . ." (12:17). That is, believe in what we say. Further support is deduced from their saying that this man believes in intercession but that man does not believe in the torment of the grave after death—that is, he does not acknowledge its reality. Hence, they regard the Iman in Islamic Law to be the same as the Iman known in the Arabic language. For Allah neither changed nor transformed the Arabic tongue. If he had done so our ancestors would have reported it and the Islamic community would have adhered to it and kept its continuity. Also, its usage would have dominated and this linguistic fact would not be hidden. But, to our knowledge, this did not happen, which indicates that speech as a whole and words that name things kept their continuity. A further indication is that the word Iman used in Islamic Law is the same as it is in the Arabic language. In support of this Allah says: "We never sent a Messenger except with the language of his own

people. . ." (14:4). He also says: "We have revealed it as an Arabic Qur'ān . . ." (43:3). In this verse, Allah declares that He has revealed the Qur'ān in the language of the Arabs and has named things in Arabic. Hence, it is not permissible to deny the apparent meaning of these verses without a strong argument, especially the declaration that the Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic. This indicates that Imaṇ is the essence of belief in Allah apart from all acts of obedience, both supererogatory acts and required practices.

The Reply of Orthodox Muslims to the Ash'arites

This is the argument that serves as the basis for support of Jahm's views on Iman, and both the people of the Sunnah and others have offered various answers to this question:

1. There are some who disagree with Jahm's view that the word Iman in the Arabic language is synonymous with taṣdīq, *assent.* Yet he insists that Iman also means iqrār, *verbal confession or acknowledgment of belief,* as well as other meanings.

2. There are those who say that linguistically the word Iman means assent. Then such belief is manifested through the heart, the tongue, and all other parts of the body as well. This is supported by the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "One's tongue confirms or denies Iman."

3. One may say that Iman is not absolute taṣdīq, *assent,* but rather a specific assent that is conditioned by qualifications attached to the term itself. Moreover, this is neither a transmission nor a changing of the term, for Allah does not command us to exercise an absolute Iman, but rather a specific sort of belief that He has described and elucidated.

4. Even if Iman means taṣdīq, perfect assent in the heart requires the obligatory deeds of the heart and other parts of the body. For negation of an obligation signals negation of the perfection of Iman. And we say: These requirements are sometimes included in the referent of the term "belief," while, at other times, they are excluded from it.

5. There are those who say that the term Iman retains the same meaning it has conveyed in the Arabic language, although the Prophet added regulations and restrictions to it.

6. There are those who say that the term Iman still has its linguistic meaning, but the Prophet (pbuh) used it in a metaphoric sense, so that it conveys a literal meaning from the legal point of view, and a figurative meaning from the linguistic point of view.

7. Some say that the term Iman is manqūl, *transmitted.*

We have enumerated seven different views, the first of which challenges the claim that the word Iman means *assent* in the Arabic language, stating instead that it means iqrār, *verbal confession.*

Ibn Taymiyyah's Refutation of the Ash'arites' Opinion

1. The Ash'arites say that the people of the language [the Arabs] unanimously agreed that before the revelation of the Qur'ān, Iman meant taṣdīq, *assent.* Against this, the author asks them: Who transmitted this total consensus of opinion [on this matter]? And how do we know that? And in which book was it mentioned?

2. Do you mean by the "people of language," the transmitters such as Abu 'Amr,[1] al-Aṣma'ī,[2] al-Khalīl,[3] and others or its speakers? On one hand, if they meant the transmitters, then one can argue that the transmitters did not transmit everything before Islam on the basis of a chain of authority. Instead, they transmitted what they heard from the Arabs living in their own times and what they heard from collections of poetry and the speech of the Arabs and others by chains of transmission. Hence, nobody knows

[1] Abu 'Amr, Ibn al-'Alā' (?–154 A.H.), was a very well-known reciter of the Qur'ān and a philologist. [*Kitāb al-Īman* MZ, p. 128.]

[2] Al-Aṣma'ī, Abu 'Abd al-Mālik Ibn Qurayb (122–216 A.H.), was a famous philologist and a scholar of Arabic literature and poetry. [*EI* 1, p. 717 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 4, pp. 307–8.]

[3] Al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhidī (?–175 A.H.) was a very famous Arab grammarian and philologist and the first to develop the rules of Arabic prosody. His major work was the first Arabic dictionary entitled *al-'Ayn*. [*EI* 2, vol.4, p. 963 and *al-Fihrist*, vol. 2, p. 1030.]

whether the term Iman was part of what they transmitted or not. On the other hand, if they meant the pre-Islamic speakers of the term Iman, then we did not hear them and none were transmitted.

3. It is not known that any of these [transmitters] said that the linguistic meaning of Iman is taṣdīq, *assent;* in fact, we do not know that any of them stated that. And even if it were suggested that one or two of them did, it would not constitute a consensus of opinion concerning this matter.

4. There are those who say that pre-Islamic speakers of Arabic did not transmit the information that a certain utterance meant such and such. Instead, they transmitted the uttered speech of the Arabs and their interpretation of it. Even if they transmitted a term from the Arabs that revealed that Iman is taṣdīq, *assent,* this is no more significant than all Muslims having transmitted the Qur'ān from the Prophet (pbuh). And if, in spite of this, some Muslims assumed that the Prophet intended certain meanings that he did not, then how much more likely would it be for such a thing to happen with respect to various words transmitted from the speech of [pre-Islamic] Arabs?

5. One can argue that in this case the transmitters were very few, to the extent that we should not rely on their transmission. And was this kind of successive transmission available to all Arabs before the revelation of the Qur'ān to indicate that the Arabs did not recognize any meaning for Iman other than taṣdīq, *assent?*

If one argues that by this token the author refutes the knowledge of language before the revelation of the Qur'ān, he [the author] remarks: "There is no need to know the language that was spoken before the revelation of the Qur'ān, for it was revealed in Arabic to the Arabs in the dialect of Quraysh, and those who were addressed by it were the Arabs." The Companions of the Prophet understood its meanings and in turn transmitted its words and meanings to their followers until it reached us. Therefore, there is no need for us to transmit that language [the language spoken before the revelation of the Qur'ān] in a way other than that in which the Qur'ān was transmitted, both in utterance and meaning. Since both the words and the meaning of the Qur'ān were transmitted in their [the Arabs] language, we know that in their language the words: samā', *sky;* arḍ, *earth;* layl,

night; nahār, *day;* shams, *sun;* qamar, *moon;* and others have the same meaning they have in the Qur'ān. Otherwise, transmitting each of these words [without referring to the Qur'ān] would be a very difficult job. With respect to any and all words, it would be difficult to ascertain, with certainty, that all Arabs meant to convey a particular meaning via a particular word. However, knowledge of the meanings contained in the Qur'ān does not require that we ascertain such a thing. The reason for this is that the Companions of the Prophet reported these meanings along with the words that conveyed them. And supposing, for example, that a community of people heard something said in a language other than Arabic, and they then translated this utterance for us, there would then be no need for us to be familiar with their original language.

6. The Ash'arites did not cite a single piece of evidence from the speech of the Arabs that supported their claim. That is, instead of citing evidence from the Qur'ān, they referred to people who said that this man believes in intercession, and that man believes in Paradise and Hell; and this man believes in torment of the grave, and that man does not believe in that. It is well known that these are not the utterances of the Arabs before the revelation of the Qur'ān, but rather of Arabs who came after the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) and who were present at the time when the heretics falsified the facts concerning intercession and the torment of the grave. Those who said so did not mean mere belief of the heart, but also the assent of the heart and the tongue. For the belief of the heart only becomes known through the tongue.

7. Whoever says: Knowledge means taṣdīq, does not mean acceptance of what he hopes and fears without having true hope and fear. But he believes in torment of the grave and fears it. He also believes in intercession and hopes for it. On the other hand, if he believes in torment of the grave but has no fear of it in his heart, he is not called a believer in it. Similarly, he is not called a believer in Paradise and Hell unless he hopes to enter Paradise and fears Hell. Likewise, Iblīs, *the devil,* is not called a believer in Allah even if he believes in the existence of Allah and His Oneness. Also, Pharaoh, to whom Allah sent Moses in order to guide him to the right path, is not called a believer although he has knowledge that Allah sent Moses as a Prophet and that He has sent the revelation. The Jews do not believe in the Qur'ān or the Messenger even though they know that they are true just as they

know their own children. There is absolutely nothing in the speech of the Arabs about someone who is aware of a thing he fears and hopes for and ought to love and glorify, but, at the same time, he does not like it or glorify it or aspire to it; rather he denies it and falsifies it with his own tongue. Even if he believed in it with his heart and falsifies it with his tongue, they would say: he is a muṣaddiq, *confirmer of belief.* However, if he believes in it and acts contrary to that belief, they would not say: he believes in it. This again confirms that there is not one single piece of evidence in the speech of the Arabs to support their claim. Allah says: ". . . But you will never believe us . . ." (12:17), which gives no indication that the word muṣaddiq is synonymous with the word "believer." For if the meaning is valid in using either of two words, it does not mean that one word is synonymous with the other.

8. With respect to the claim that "they know of no other sort of 'belief' in the Arabic language," one may ask: On what basis can one make such a sweeping negation? This is merely a claim made in ignorance.

9. There are those who claim that the word Iman, *belief,* was taken originally from the word for ʾamn, *safety* or *security.* Statements regarding this are cited below, in shāʾa Allah. However, the word "belief" has been passed down in the language with a meaning that differs from this, as has been noted in a statement[4] by the teacher Abu al-Bayān.[5]

10. It is stated that if we assume that the linguistic meaning of Iman is taṣdīq, *assent,* then of course it does not thereby mean the assent of anything and everything without exception. Rather, it refers to belief in an assent of the truths reported by the speech of the Legislator [the Prophet, pbuh]. Therefore, the meaning of Iman, when used by the Prophet, will be narrower and more specific than it would be in the Arabic language in general. As we know, a specific usage of a word will involve restrictions and qualifications that are not found when a word is used in a more general

[4] According to the editors of the different editions of *Kitab al-Iman,* there is a blank here in the original Indian edition, upon which the editors based the present volume, as well as in all other editions we have consulted (especially MI.2, MZ, and MKH).

[5] Abu al-Bayān al-Shaykh, al-Qurayshī (?–551 A.H.), was the head of the al-Bayāniyyah Sūfī group in Damascus. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 130 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 8, p. 320.]

sense. For example, the word for ḥayawān, *animal,* referring to a general category, also includes specific species, one of which is the human species. Hence, the single term "animal" includes within it both a more general and a more specific meaning. Likewise with regard to taṣdīq, which is understood as Iman, its minimum condition would be the existence of a general sort of taṣdīq, though its general and specific senses would not correspond to one another without some change reflected in the tongue and the heart [that is, in one's utterances and inward state]. As for the general use of the word Iman in the speech of the Legislator, it is composed of both the general and the specific, as when we describe a person as being both an animal and being nāṭiq, *capable of speech.*[6]

11. The Qur'ān does not mention an undefined, absolute Iman but rather remarks that the word Iman occurs as either conditioned, or absolute and defined. An illustration of the conditioned Iman is indicated in Allah's saying: ". . . They believe in the unseen . . ." (2:3); and His saying: "But none believed in Moses except the offspring of his people . . ." (10:83); and of the absolute Iman in His saying: "For, believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts . . ." (8:2); and "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their lives in the Cause of Allah. Such are the sincere ones" (49:15); and "But no, by your Lord, they can have no belief until they make you a judge in all disputes between them and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission" (4:65), as well as other similar verses. Thus, every instance of absolute Iman in the Qur'ān shows that man cannot be a believer unless he proves it by works accompanied by assent. Allah shows in the Qur'ān that Iman requires works with taṣdīq, *assent.* A similar case has been made with regard to the words "prayer," "zakah," "fasting," and "pilgrimage" (i.e., they must be accompanied with works and assent).

Someone might say: These words remain as they are, however, their referents have come to include words that they did not include before, even though the words

[6] A commonly used Arabic epithet for the human, as distinguished from other animals, is al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq, *the talking animal.*

themselves are unchanged. This is the position taken by Judge Abu Yaʿlā and others. And to this one may reply that if this claim is correct, then could not the same be said concerning the word Iman? This question has been addressed to some who hold the above view, but it has not been answered satisfactorily, and it has been claimed that this matter has not been treated in the Qur'ān, which is not the case. In fact, both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are replete with references that indicate that a person cannot justly be described as a believer unless his Iman includes both works and assent. Moreover, this type of reference in the Qurʾān is found much more frequently than those referring to prayer and the giving of zakah. For these latter terms are only explained in the Sunnah, whereas the meaning of the word Iman is explained in both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and was agreed upon unanimously by the pious ancestors.

12. If it was that the Legislator [the Prophet, pbuh] addressed the people in the language of the Arabs. In that case he addressed them in their common language. In their tradition, a name can be absolute and general, and a restriction can be inserted to specify its meaning. They say: "He went to the judge or to the governor or to the Amīr," when they are referring to a specific person, while the definite article indicates that this person is someone who is known. These nouns [judge, governor, and Amīr] refer to classes or categories, and do not normally indicate a specific person belonging to one of those categories. So it is with words such as Iman, ṣalāh, and zakah, which have been used by the Prophet with the definite article. And the Prophet (pbuh) taught them that what is intended by the meaning of Iman is the type of Iman whose attribute is such and such, and by the meaning of supplication whose attribute is such and such in the language of the Arabs as equivalent to assent. He explained: "I am not satisfied with the belief of the heart and the tongue rather than the belief of the heart alone." But something must act in accordance with that belief, as Allah says: "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted . . ." (49:15). He also says: "For believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts . . ." (8:2). There is also the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "You do not believe until you are such and such." And Allah says: "You [Oh, Muḥammad] will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger

. . ." (58:22). And He says: "If only they had believed in Allah and in the Prophet and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them for friends . . ." (5:81). There are many other such references in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. For example, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits it"; and "He whose neighbor is not secure from his harmful conduct is not a believer." The Prophet made clear to them that taṣdīq without which a person cannot be regarded as a believer is to be belief of this sort. Moreover, he elucidated this fact in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah without any changing or transmitting of the language.

13. Their saying, had the Prophet (pbuh) done that, would have recurred on successive occasions, can be answered when the Prophet (pbuh) shifted some terms away from their linguistic origins into new meanings and changed their connotations. It is stated repeatedly that the Prophet (pbuh) intended the well- known meanings of 'prayer,' 'zakah,' 'fasting,' and 'pilgrimage'. What the Prophet intended by the meaning of Iman is based on its meaning in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and a person will not be considered a believer unless he believes in this type of Iman. Allah says: "For the believers . . ." (8:2). This is attested frequently throughout the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. It is also attested in numerous independent sources that no one was to be judged a believer who did not perform his religious duties. Similarly, the Prophet said: "He who dies as a believer will enter Paradise and will not suffer torment;" and "The sinner does not deserve this [grace] but rather is subject to grievous punishment." The Prophet has given the term Iman and its meanings and conditions more attention than any other subject. What sounder attestation could one ask for than this? There also have been those who call for this to be transmitted and made known. Praise be to Allah for this. No one can claim from the Prophet (pbuh) anything that might contradict this statement. It was also reported that the Prophet stated that anyone who has even something of Iman will exit the Hellfire, and he did not say that the believer will enter it nor that the sinners are believers. However, the name Iman is bestowed upon the sinners in certain situations, just as it is with the hypocrites, but under stricter conditions. On the other hand, absolute Iman, upon which Allah

promised the believer to enter Paradise, will not apply to either these or those [sinners or hypocrites].

14. There is no justification for departing from the obvious meanings of these verses which indicate that it is Arabic. It would be said to a person that these verses explain the word "believer" and negate belief for anyone who does not perform good works. This evidence is even more explicit, clear, and numerous that those other verses referred to. Moreover, if such verses indicate that it was Arabic, then what has been mentioned [here] does not preclude that. Hence, when he [the Prophet] spoke to them using the terms "prayer," "pilgrimage," and other such [words] they [the Arabs] did not say: This is not Arabic. In fact the Prophet addressed them by the term "hypocrites," a word which, according to Arab philologists, was not known in pre-Islamic times. However, they did not say: It is not Arabic, since the word munāfiq, *hypocrite,* is derived from the verb nafaqa, *to act contrary to the dictates of one's conscience.* So if the term was derived from their own language, and some liberties were taken with it, as was the custom among speakers of the language, then this would not have excluded it from being Arabic.

15. If it is assumed that such words are not in fact of Arabic origin, then rendering these general terms more specific is no more significant than the act of shifting the meaning of the term Iman away from what it signified according to the Book, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the pious ancestors. For the texts that exclude from Iman whoever does not love Allah and His Messenger, does not fear Allah, fails to perform his obligations, and embrace what Allah has forbidden, are both numerous and explicit. So assuming that the meaning of certain words may conflict with the connotation of a specific sense of Qur'ānic verse, in this case, then making a few general terms more specific is preferable to rejecting numerous unambiguous and sound texts.

16. There are some who, although they are aware of the general nature of certain terms, do not acknowledge their generality. However, the pious ancestors said: The Messenger of Allah instructed us concerning the meanings of the word Iman. Of necessity, he taught us what he meant by

> it. He also taught us with a certainty, admitting of no doubt that anyone who believes (the Prophet), yet does not express his belief verbally, even though he is capable of doing so, does not pray, fast, or love either Allah or His Messenger, nor does he fear Allah—but rather, displays hatred and enmity toward Allah's Messenger and fights against him—is not a believer. He also taught us that the unbelievers from among the polytheists, as well as the People of the Book [i.e., Jews and Christians], who knew that he was Allah's Messenger yet still behaved like the unbelievers described above, were unbelievers rather than believers. Matters such as these are far more certain to us than the claim that the Qur'ān contains no words or expressions that are not of Arabic origin. Hence, if there were ever any conflict [between these two teachings], we would choose to give precedence to those beliefs that are the most certain and necessary.

Someone might say: Should it be known that the Prophet has declared someone to be an unbeliever, then it is likewise certain that there is no taṣdīq, *assent,* in his heart. In response to this we would say: This is mukābarah, *haughtiness.* If they mean that such a person is doubtful or skeptical, or that such a person's belief is not accompanied by assent such that he has practically no belief at all, then this would be correct. If it is established that Iman means solely the assent and knowledge of the heart, then one could justify the just conclusion [namely, that the person is doubtful and skeptical, and in this sense lacks belief]. As for the second conclusion, it may only be established if one acknowledges these prior assumptions, of which this is one. For one's claim cannot be established on the basis of the other, despite the person's unbelief. Someone else might say: We know with a certainty that the Jews and others recognized that Muḥammad was the Messenger of Allah, and that he judged them to be unbelievers. Hence, we know from the religion of the Prophet that despite the fact that it has been established that someone believes with his heart in Muḥammad's Prophethood, the Prophet must nevertheless declare him an unbeliever if this person does not act on his behalf, loving and honoring the Prophet and submitting to the message that he brought.

According to one of the arguments cited against this view, it has been said: If what you have mentioned is true, then it would serve better as evidence in favor of the views of the Murji'ites, or even those of the Karrāmite sect, than as evidence for

your own.[7] The reason for this is that if Iman is as you have described it, then taṣdīq, *assent,* is simply a kind of speech. For the uses of the word kalām, *speech,* and qawl, *utterance,* and the like have to do with both meaning and expression, while the use of expressions to convey some meaning is more frequent in language than the occurrence of some meaning abstracted from the word through which it is expressed. In fact, one will never find the word "speech," of any kind, used in an absolute, unrestricted sense; this includes words such as khabar, *report;* taṣdīq, *assent;* takdhīb, *disbelief;* ʾamr, *command;* and nahy, *prohibition*—none of which are ever used without any restriction or qualification in the form of some accompanying expression, gesture, or the like. And if Allah has revealed the Qurʾān in the language of the Arabs, then it must be remembered that this language only recognizes the use of words such as taṣdīq, *assent,* takdhīb, *disbelief,* and others as a kind of unit consisting of both meaning and verbal expression, or a verbal expression that conveys a meaning. Therefore, Allah considers no one to have believed His Messengers simply on the basis of knowledge, or the belief that resides in someone's heart, until he expresses that belief outwardly with the tongue. Nor will one ever hear a speaker of Arabic say: So and so believed [or disbelieved] so and so, if the first person simply knows in his heart that the other person is truthful or untruthful, but without voicing that knowledge. Likewise one would not say: "he commanded him," or "he forbade him," if the command or prohibition merely existed in the person's mind without being accompanied by some sort of verbal expression, gesture, or the like. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "This prayer of ours is not beneficial in the least according to what people say"; and he said: "Allah introduces whatever new commands He wills, and among His new commands is that you should not speak while you perform your ritual prayers." Muslim scholars agree that if one speaks during prayer without intending through what he says to benefit his prayer in some way, then the effect of his prayer is nullified. They also agree that the belief residing in one's heart in regard to worldly matters and desires does not nullify prayer; rather, what nullifies it is for one to speak of these things. Hence, there is agreement among Muslims that such inward belief is not considered true speech.

Likewise in the two collections of sound ḥadiths we read that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah will overlook whatever my people say to themselves in their hearts,

[7] The editors of MI.2 and MZ remark in footnotes to their editions that, according to the Karrāmite sect, Iman is nothing but the verbal expression of belief.

provided that they neither utter it aloud nor act upon it." In other words, the Prophet declares that Allah pardons a person for the things he says to himself, provided that they are not spoken outwardly. Hence, he distinguished between ḥadith al-nafs, *talking with oneself,* and actual kalām, *speech,* saying that one is not held responsible for the former until or unless it becomes the latter. Muslim scholars agree that what is meant here is that one is only held accountable for what he utters with the tongue. Hence, it is certain that this is what "speech" means in the Arabic language, because al-S͟hāriᶜ, *the Legislator [the Prophet],* as he determined to do, addressed us only in the language of the Arabs.

We also read in al-Sunan, *the books of traditions,* that Muᶜād͟h once said to the Prophet: "Oh, Messenger of Allah! Are we considered blameworthy for what we say?" To this the Prophet replied: "And are people cast into Hell on their faces" or, he said, "on their nostrils, except as the harvest of [what their] tongues have sown?" He thus makes clear that speech is what is expressed by the tongue. The Prophet (pbuh) is also reported, in Buk͟hārī's *Ṣaḥīh,* to have said: "The truest word spoken by a poet is that of Labīd: 'Indeed, everything apart from Allah is falsehood and futility.'" And in the two collections of sound ḥadiths, he is reported to have said: "There are two words that are light on the tongue but weighty in the balance, and precious to the most Merciful One: 'Praise be to Allah!' and 'Praise be to Allah Almighty!'" Allah says: "And warn those who say 'Allah has chosen a son' and He also says 'No knowledge have they of such a thing, nor their fathers. Mighty is the word that comes out of their mouths. They utter nothing but a lie.'"(18:4–5). And we also read in *al-Ṣaḥīh* that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The most excellent speech of the Qurʾān consists of four words [i.e., phrases] that are themselves in the Qurʾān: 'Allah be praised,' 'Praise be to Allah,' There is no god but Allah,' and 'Allah is greatest!'" (This was recorded by Muslim.) In addition, Allah says: ". . . To Him ascend the good words, and the righteous work does He exalt . . ." (35:10). And there are numerous similar statements.

On the whole, wherever Allah mentions any of the Prophets in His Book, or those who have believed or disbelieved them, saying "They said . . . ," "They say . . . ," "This is what they said . . . ," and the like, what He intends in these references is the meaning together with the verbal expression of that meaning. For the meaning concerned, along with the various forms of verbal expressions which arise out of it such as commands, verbs in the past and present tense, verbal nouns or active participles derived from words such as kalām, *speech,* qawl, *a saying or utterance,*

and so on, are all known in the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and all other forms of speech among the Arabs. The same is true of the various other types of speech, such as taṣdīq, disbelief, commanding and prohibition. Moreover, examples of such phenomena are something that no one can deny, for they are too numerous even to count. There was no dispute over what is referred to by the word "speech" among the Prophet's Companions, their Successors, or their followers' followers, neither among ahl al-Sunnah, the *Orthodox Muslims,* nor ahl al-Bidʿah, the *heretical sects.* Rather, the first Muslim known to have considered the word "speech" to refer solely to the meaning was ʿAbd Allah Ibn Saʿīd Ibn Kullāb, a later thinker who lived in the era during which Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal suffered his miḥnah, *ordeal.*[8] He was denounced for this view by both Orthodox and non-Orthodox Muslim scholars, since it implies that speech is not the most manifest characteristic of human beings. Allah says: "And by Lord of the heaven and the earth, it is the truth, just as it is the truth that you can speak" (51:23). Moreover, the word "speech" contains innumerable facets that were not recognized by any of the Prophet's Companions, their Successors, or their followers' followers until there appeared someone who adopted a view of it that was unprecedented among both Muslims and others.

Someone might say: Allah says: ". . . And say within themselves . . ." (58:8); and "And you should remember your Lord within yourself humbly and with fear . . ." (7:205) and the like. To this we would reply that if what is meant is that they uttered these things secretly with their tongues, then no one could raise any argument in objection. In fact, this is the interpretation that most commentators have given for this verse. According to them, they used to say in their greeting: sām ʿalayka, *poison on you.*[9] Then when they came out they would say to one

[8] The Caliph al-Ma'mūn (?– 833 A.D.) adopted the Mu'tazilites' teaching that the Qur'ān is created. This doctrine became the official government stance. Furthermore, all who were found to disagree with this teaching were subjected to a brutal inquisition that came to be known as al-miḥnah, *the ordeal.* Among those who suffered at al-Ma'mūn's hands for doctrinal reasons was Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, who refused to recant his belief in an eternal, uncreated prototype of the earthly Qur'ān.

[9] The greeting al-salāmu ʿalayka (usually al-salāmu ʿalaykum) is the normal greeting. However, those who are greeting have used sām alayka, which is a corruption of the standard greeting formula and may have a bad connotation. They are playing with the word al-salām, *peace,* using sām instead which, when said quickly, sounds about the same but has the meaning to humiliate or treat unjustly. The phrase sām ʿalayka, actually means *poison upon you.* The Prophet responded by not repeating the full greeting but only using the words ʿalayka or ʿakaykum, which mean *upon you.*

another: "if he were a prophet, he would torment us by what we say to him." And if it is assumed that the meaning intended here is that they spoke these things in their hearts, then this would be an utterance restricted to the soul, as Allah's says: ". . . For what they have said to themselves . . ." (58:8). Hence, some of them have said: ". . . lest Allah punish us for what we say." Here the term qawl, a *saying,* is used in an absolute sense and the reference is to what they have uttered with their tongues. For it was secret conversations and greetings that they had been forbidden to engage in. As in Allah's saying: "Have you not seen those who are forbidden to hold secret counsels, and afterward return to that which they have been forbidden, and conspired together for sin, wrongdoing, and disobedience to the Messenger, and when they come to you, they greet you with a greeting wherewith Allah greets you not, and they say within themselves: 'Why should Allah punish us not for what we say? . . .'" (58:8). And although the correct interpretation is the one accepted by most commentators and the one that is supported by parallel Qur'ānic verses, nevertheless the Prophet (pbuh) said that "Allah says: 'Whoever makes mention of Me in his soul, of him will I make mention in My soul. And whoever makes mention of Me before a throng, of him will I make mention before a better throng.'" What is meant here is not that the person does not speak of Allah with his tongue, but that he has brought Allah to remembrance both in his soul and with his tongue.

Likewise Allah says: "Make mention of your Lord within your soul in supplication and fear, but without raising your voice aloud . . ." (7:205). Reference is made to making mention of Allah al-jahr min al-qawl, *uttered clearly with the tongue,* whereas that which is restricted to the soul is the expression lafẓ al-ḥadith, *silent conversation.* Hence, use has been made of the phrase ḥadith al-nafs, *the soul's conversation* or *talking with oneself*; however, one never hears kalām al-nafs, *the soul's speech.* Thus the expression lafẓ al-ḥadith is usually used to express dreams that one sees in his sleep. Moreover, the word ḥadith has been used to speak of the statement by Jacob, as in Allah's saying: ". . . Thus your Lord chooses you and teaches you the interpretation of dreams . . ." (12:6). Likewise the statement by Joseph in Allah's saying: ". . . And you taught me the interpretation of dreams . . ." (12:101). References such as these have to do not with the tongue but with the soul, since the phrase lafẓ al-ḥadith may be restricted to what is in the soul, unlike the word kalām, which is not known to have been used to refer to what is in the soul alone.

Allah says: "And keep your talk secret or disclose it, verily He [Allah] knows all of what is in the breasts [of men]" (67:13). This refers to words that are sometimes kept secret so that no one else hears them, and that at other times are expressed aloud so that they can be heard. By the same token one might say: 'he read silently' or 'he read aloud;' or one might speak alternatively of silent prayer and public prayer. Therefore, Allah did not say: "utter it with your tongues or with your hearts." For it is inconceivable that what is [only] in the soul should be expressed aloud; rather, that which may be voiced aloud is what is on the tongue.

Allah says: ". . . He knows all of what is in the breasts [of men]" (67:13), and this is a kind of warning. It is as if to say: if Allah knows what is in the heart, how would He fail to know also what is spoken? As Allah says in another verse: "And if you [Oh, Muḥammad] speak aloud then indeed He knows the secret and that which is yet more hidden" (20:7). Here Allah declares that He knows what is spoken aloud. This is indicated by the fact that He says: "And keep your talk secret or disclose it, indeed He [Allah] knows all of what is in the breasts [of men]" (67:13). Now, if He means by the word qawl, *a saying,* that which is in the soul, having already declared that He knows what is in the breasts [hearts of men], He would not have mentioned His knowledge of the other type—that is, what is spoken aloud. And if someone were to say: "he was given a warning," one might reply: "yes, he was." In fact, he was given a warning concerning both outward and inward thoughts. Allah says ". . . Your sign is that you shall not speak to the people for three days except with signals . . ." (3:41). It is also mentioned where He says: ". . . Your sign is that you shall not speak to the people for three nights, although you are not dumb" (19:10). In the second verse Allah makes no exceptions whatsoever, although both verses are part of a single story. This in turn indicates that the exception made is noncontiguous, while the meaning of Allah's saying: "Your sign shall be that you will speak to people only in signs," is consistent with parallel verses in the Qur'ān. Moreover, Allah says ". . . And he signified to them . . ." (19:11), which refers to his signaling to them. And if we assumed that this signaling represented a contiguous exception, then it would be included in the words that are qualified by the exception, as in Allah's saying: "It is not fitting for any human being that Allah should speak to him unless by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or that He sends a Messenger to reveal what He wills by His leave . . ." (42:51).

However, it does not follow necessarily from the above that this [i.e., the word, ramz, *signaling*] is included in the word kalām, *speech,* used in an absolute sense. For the language of the [Arab] people never included any indication that the words "speech," "utterance," "assent," or "disbelief," when used in an absolute manner, encompass that which is only in the soul. For it is a certainty that anyone who has not verbally expressed his belief, despite his ability to do so, will not be referred to as a believer in the normal usage of the language. This was agreed upon by the pious ancestors, including the Prophet's Companions and their Successors.

ʿUmar [Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb] may Allah pleased with him, once said: "I zawwartu, *rehearsed,* in my soul something that I wanted to say." This statement may be used as an argument against them [i.e., those who claim that the word "speech" may refer to what is only in the soul]. According to Abu ʿUbayd, the word tazwīr, *rehearsing,* means the correction and preparation of some kind of utterance. Abu Zayd commented on this word by saying: "An utterance that has been 'rehearsed' is the same as an utterance that has been formed as al-kalām al-muzawwaq, *an utterance pictured* or *visualized in the imagination;* and both of them refer to an utterance that has been amended and is beautiful." Someone else said: "I inwardly rehearsed an utterance;" that is, "I prepared something with the intent of saying it," which implies that the person has inwardly evaluated what he wanted to say, but did not say it. Hence, such inwardly visualized words cannot be considered an actual qawl, *utterance,* unless they are voiced with the tongue. Prior to this it is not an utterance, but rather, words presented inwardly in the soul and evaluated with the intent to speak. Similarly, someone might determine or anticipate inwardly that he will go on pilgrimage, pray, go on a journey, and so on. In each case, what the person wants to say or do will appear as a visual image in his soul. However, it will not be considered an actual qawl, *utterance,* or ʿamal, *work,* unless it comes to have outward existence, just as a person does not earn the title of Ḥajjī [a person who has gone to Hajj or on pilgrimage] or become recognized as one who prays until he performs outwardly the required acts. For this reason, forbidden words or actions that a person may be about to speak or perform will not be held against him unless he actually speaks or performs those words or actions, in which case he will be punished for them. As for each commendable word or action that one is about to speak or do, it will be reckoned as a single good deed, and if he actually speaks such words and performs such actions, they may be reckoned to his account as anywhere from ten to seven hundred praiseworthy deeds. As the Prophet (pbuh)

said: "Allah will overlook those words and deeds that My people have spoken to themselves about, provided that they do not utter them aloud or perform them." Related to this is a verse of poetry attributed to al-Akhṭal which says:

> In the heart is true speech to be found
> While the tongue is but a guide to the heart's intent.

According to Abu Muḥammad Ibn al-Khashshāb,[10] there are those who deny that this verse can rightly be attributed to al-Akhṭal. They say they have searched the collections of his poetry and have not been able to find this verse, while others have said that rather than kalām, *speech,* it should read bayān, *declaration.*

If someone argued for his point of view on a given issue by citing a ḥadith from the two collections of sound ḥadiths on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh), one could say that although this is a single report, it is among those sources that scholars of Islam have agreed should be believed and accepted. As for this verse, however, it has not been traced back to its originator through a reliable chain of authority, nor has it even been accepted by Arab linguists. This being the case, how could the most minor point concerning the language be established on the basis of such a verse, much less the entity referred to by the word kalām, *speech?* Besides this, it might be said that establishing the referents of words such as "speech," "utterance," and so on, does not require a quotation from a poet, since such matters have already been treated by Arab philologists, from the early days of Islam to the present. Such scholars have already established the meanings of such terms in the language, just as we are certain of the referents of such words as "head," "hand," and "leg."

Moreover, those who speak the language may argue in favor of the meanings of words based on their usage of such words, not based on limitations that could be mentioned. For no Arab linguist who is a speaker of the language has ever said: "the head is thus and so," "the hand is thus and so," "speech is thus and so," or "color is thus and so." Rather, they simply utter these words in such a way that indicates their meanings, and one can become familiar with their language through their usage of them.

[10] Ibn al-Khashshāb, ʿAbd Allah Ibn Aḥmad (?–567 A.H.), was a well-known philologist and a scholar of ḥadith and tafsīr. His book on Arabic grammar is entitled *al-Murtajal.* [*Kitāb al-Iman* MZ, pp. 139–40.]

Now it is certain that if al-Akhtal was indeed the author of this verse, then he did not intend by it to speak of the entity to which the word "speech" refers. Nor was this the intent of any of the poets. Rather, what he meant—if in fact he spoke these words—was what commentators on poetry have taken him to mean, namely: that speech originates in the heart, and that the essence of speech is meaning. Therefore, if anyone says with his tongue what is not in his heart, then you should place no confidence in him. This is similar to statements that Allah has made concerning the hypocrites, who said, "say with their tongues what is not in their hearts." Therefore the poet said:

> Do not be struck with wonder at exquisite oration
> Until the orator, with his words, becomes noble and pure.
> In the heart is true speech to be found,
> While the tongue is but a guide to the heart's intent.

The poet forbid his listeners to be filled with admiration for a speaker's words as they appear on the surface until they know for certain what is in the speaker's heart. This is why he said: "until the orator, with his words, becomes noble and pure." His saying "with his words" indicates that he was referring to the outward verbal expression as kalām, *words,* even though he is not certain whether the inward meaning of these words resides within the speaker. These considerations may be used as an argument against them in this way or that way, for these lines of poetry contain both of these significant insights into the nature of speech. In fact, the poet's use of the phrase maʿa al-kalām, *with his words,* is used in an absolute sense. And by saying, "in the heart is true speech to be found," he was referring to the origin of speech and the meanings one intends to convey through it. And to all these realities the tongue is a [mere] guide.

In summation, if anyone needs to discover the meanings of the words "speech," "mare," "the Byzantines," "the Turks," and all other races of human beings through quotations from poets, then no one could be further from an understanding of the means of attaining knowledge! Furthermore, the poet cited here is not one of the ancients, but a post-classical poet, not to mention his being a blasphemous Christian who worships three gods in one! Not only that, but his very name-al-Akhtal is derived from a word meaning "to talk nonsense"! And as if this were not enough to discredit him, the Christians are known to have been mistaken in their understanding of what is referred to by the term "speech"; after all, they consider Jesus Christ to be self-existent and to be the very Word of God.

It has become clear that if the linguistic meaning of Iman is "assent," and if the Qur'ān means nothing by this term except that sort of assent that is a verbal utterance rather than also considering works as a part of such assent, then one must conclude that the only correct view is that of the Murji'ites—namely, that Iman refers to verbal expression and the meaning that this expression conveys. Alternatively, one must adopt the view of the Karrāmite sect, which considered belief to be nothing but an utterance of the tongue, since referring to such a verbal expression as a qawl, is more common in linguistic usage than referring to some meaning in the heart as a saying. As Allah says: ". . . They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts . . ." (48:11); and "And from among the people, there are some [hypocrites] who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' while in fact they do not believe" (2:8). There are other similar statements that indicate a distinction between the referent of the term "saying" on the one hand, and what is only in the soul on the other; the latter is referred to as ḥadith, *conversation*. The Karrāmites[11] said that the hypocrite, though a believer, will abide eternally in Hell because he believed outwardly but not inwardly. The only persons who shall enter Paradise are those who have believed both outwardly and inwardly.

According to the Karrāmites, the evidence that indicates that even the hypocrite can be described as a believer is that he is included in worldly judgments that pertain to the term Iman, *belief*, or mu'min, *believer*, as in Allah's saying: ". . . the freeing of a believing slave . . ." (4:92). Outwardly speaking, the hypocrite speaks out about al-Jumʿah, *Friday prayer*, and ṭahārah, *purification*, just as he does about other characteristics that apply to those who have [truly] believed.

As for who has ṣaddaqa, *believed*, in his heart but has not expressed that belief with the tongue, then no judgments pertaining to believers may be applied to him, either in this life or the next. Nor is he included among Allah's servants who are addressed in the words: "Oh, you who believed! . . ." (2:104). But even though the

[11] The editor of MI.2 supplied this footnote from information in the margin of the Indian version of *Kitab* al-Iman.The Karrāmite sect was named after its leader, Abu ʿAbd Allah, Muḥammad Ibn Karrām al- Nīsābūrī. His father kept a karm (karmah), *vineyard*, and therefore he was given the name Karrām, *vinedresser*. This Abu ʿAbd Allah was originally an inhabitant of the city of Nisābūr, from which he was later expelled. He then moved to Jerusalem, where he resided until his death in 244 A.H. (These facts were heard by ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥarb and others, and transmitted on the authority of Ibrāhīm Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Sufayyān, Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Hajjāj, and others. In addition, Ibn Ḥabbān said: He suffered setbacks until he picked up the very worst of the doctrines and the traditions with the weakest attestation.)

view of the Karrāmites on Iman was invalid and heretical and had never been adopted by anyone before them, the view of the Jahmites was even more groundless, since the Karrāmites relied more than the Jahmites on evidence from the Arabic language, the Qur'ān, and reason.

One point on which the Karrāmites, the Murji'ites, and the Jahmites agreed was that all peoples' belief is to be considered equal, and no exceptions are to be made among them. Whoever displayed belief outwardly is described by them as being truly a believer. But if the individual is a hypocrite, he will abide eternally in Hell, since only those who believe both outwardly and inwardly shall enter Paradise. Thus, whoever claims that the Karrāmites said that the hypocrite enters Paradise has misrepresented their views. What they said is that the hypocrite is a believer, but that belief is nothing but an outward expression. Others refer to the hypocrite as a Muslim, saying that Islam is nothing but outward submission. As for the claims of the Jahmites they were, without a doubt, even more baseless than those of the Karrāmites, whether in relation to Islamic law, linguistics, or reason.

Someone might say: The views of the Karrāmites fell beyond the pale of the doctrines agreed upon unanimously by the pious ancestors. To this one might reply: The view of Jahm on belief was in conflict with what was unanimously agreed upon by virtually all Muslims who came before him. In fact, the pious ancestors declared anyone who adopted Jahm's teachings to be an unbeliever with regard to belief. Sound arguments have been presented in refutation of the views of the Karrāmites; however, arguments of this sort against the views of the Jahmites are even more numerous. Allah says, for example: "And from among the people, there are some [hypocrites] who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' while in fact they believe not" (2:8). Hence, Allah has denied that hypocrites may be said to have belief.

We are in agreement with this; the hypocrite is certainly not a believer, and whoever describes him thus is in error. The same applies to anyone in whose heart there resides knowledge and assent yet who at the same time displays ingratitude and enmity toward the Messenger. Such were the Jews and others, whom Allah declares to be unbelievers and never once referred to them as believers. Unlike the hypocrites, the above-mentioned groups were not included in any outward, worldly judgements pertaining to believers. However, Allah excludes from belief those who believe, with their tongues and their hearts but do not perform works.

Allah says: "The desert Arabs say, 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith; but you [only] say, We have submitted our wills to Allah . . .'" (49:14). He also says: "Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their lives in the Cause of Allah: Such are the sincere ones" (49:15). Hence, He confines Iman only to those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger. Allah says: "They say, 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey,' but even after that, some of them turn away: they are not [really] believers." (24:47). The term tawalī, *turning away,* means turning away from obedience, as Allah says: ". . . You shall be summoned [to fight] against a people given to vehement war: Then shall you fight, or they shall submit. Then if obedience is shown, Allah will grant you a goodly reward, but if you turn away as you did before, He will punish you with a grievous penalty" (48:16); and "So he did not believe, nor did he pray! But on the contrary, he rejected truth and turned away!" (75:31–32); and "None shall enter it [Hell] save the most wretched, who denies and turns away" (92:15–16). Moses and his brother Hārūn said, as in Allah's saying: "Truly, it has been revealed to us that the torment will be for him who denies and turns away" (20:48). Accordingly, the term 'turning away; does not refer to disbelieving but to turning away from obedience. For people must believe in what the Messenger said and obey what he commanded. Indeed, the opposite of belief is disbelief, and the opposite of obedience is turning away. That is why Allah says: "So he did not believe, nor did he pray! But on the contrary, he rejected truth and turned away!" (75:31–32). Allah also says: "They say: 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey,' but even after that, some of them turn away: they are not [really] believers" (24:47). In this verse, Allah denies Iman from the one who turns away from working righteousness even if he has expressed belief verbally. Allah says: "Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger: When they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave . . ." (24:62). He also says: "For believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts . . ." (8:2).

The Qur'ān and the Sunnah are full of verses that indicate that Iman is negated for both the person who does not work righteousness and the hypocrite. However, he who has knowledge of Iman in his heart but contradicts that knowledge with his deeds and shows enmity toward Allah is never called a believer. In the view of the Jahmites, anyone who has inward knowledge in his heart is a believer with perfect

belief. Indeed, his belief is as complete as that of the prophets themselves, regardless of what he says or does. Nor is it conceivable that such a person should cease to have belief unless he ceases also to have inward knowledge in his heart.

As for the later thinkers in Islam who supported Jahm's views, most of them advocated the position of istithnā', *exception,* with respect to belief. According to these thinkers, belief in Islamic law is "that through which the servant fulfills his duties toward his Lord," even though the meaning of "belief" in linguistic usage is broader than this. So with regard to the issue of making an exception, they considered the referent of the word "belief" to be the same as what they claimed to be its referent according to Islamic teachings. In so doing, they departed from the connotation of "belief" as generally used in language; so one wonders why they did not do the same with respect to works. There are innumerable references in Islamic teachings to indicate that obligatory good works form part of perfect belief. These teachings do not indicate, however, that the only entity to be referred to as belief is the state in which one dies; there is no support whatsoever for this view in Islamic law. Rather, these teachings were a later introduction, and were not advocated by any of the pious ancestors. However, those who supported Jahm's views thought that those among the pious ancestors who "made the exception" with regard to belief did so on the basis of such a teaching [i.e., that the referent of "belief" is simply the state in which one dies]. But such thinkers were not well versed in the teachings of the pious ancestors. As a result, they argued in favor of the apparent meaning of the pious ancestors' teachings by appealing to doctrines that they had adopted from Jahmite scholastic theologians and other heretical thinkers. Hence, what they were advocating appeared on the surface to reflect the views of the pious ancestors, whereas its core consisted of the views of the Jahmites, whose understanding of belief is more corrupt than that of virtually anyone else. For this reason, when some of Abu al-Ḥassan [al-Ash'arī's] followers began to discover the falsehood of Jahm's views on belief, many of them took issue with such views, and among these followers, some adopted the teachings of the pious ancestors. And, Allah willing, we will make mention below of statements made by the pious ancestors on the issue of "making the exception" with respect to belief.

Abu al-Qāsim al-Anṣārī, the teacher of al-Shahrastānī, said in his interpretation of the *Book of al-Irshād* [The Counseling], written by Abu al-Ma'ālī, that Iman consists entirely of acts of obedience. In other words, Iman is the practice of the

commands of Allah and abstaining from what is prohibited. He also said that this is what Abu ʿAlī al-Thaqafī and Abu al-ʿAbbās al-Qalānisī believed. Also inclined to this way of interpreting belief was Abu ʿAbd Allah Ibn Mujāhid, who said that Mālik Ibn Anas and most of the leaders of the pious ancestors used to say: "Iman is the knowledge of the heart, the confession of the tongue, and performance in accordance with the five pillars [of Islam]."

There are those who adopt the view of the Murjiʾites, according to which belief is both assent in the heart and [expression of that belief] with the tongue. In addition there are those who, like Abu Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī, stipulate that if out of obstinacy someone fails to express his belief in words, then according to Islamic teachings, he is considered an unbeliever, even if in his heart he has both knowledge and belief. Al-Anṣārī once said: I have seen in his writings that one is only a true believer if he completes his belief with works of righteousness, just as the scholar is only a true scholar if he acts on his learning and knowledge. In support of this he cited Allah's saying: "The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts and when His verses are recited, increase their belief; and they put their trust in their Lord. Who offer prayers and spend out of that which We provided them, it is they who are the believers in truth . . ." (8:2–4).[12] Abu Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī said that linguistically, the word Iman means taṣdīq, which will not be realized except through knowledge and doing what one is commanded to do. Furthermore, both signal and compliance may function as utterances.[13]

In his book, *al-Asmāʾ Wa al-Ṣifāt (Names and Attributes)*, Abu Isḥāq [al-Isfarāyīnī] said that he who is judged as a believer has many attributes, although there was no agreement either on some details of these traits or on some additions that do not correspond to the general belief. Examples of what have to be abandoned are: the attempted killing of the Messenger, inflicting harm on him, and worshiping idols. Examples of what have to be done are: supporting and defending the Messenger. All this constitutes what Iman implies, belief plus all the

[12] In the texts of the editions of MI.2 and MZ of *Kitab al-Iman* only the first part of verse 2 is given, after which the citation picks up with the first portion of verse 4. For the reader's convenience, these verses are cited in their entirety.

[13] The reference here is to people who cannot speak or hear. Signals and compliance are accepted from them in place of normal utterances of speech.

above-mentioned conditions. Others have said that committing a major sin does not exclude one from the domain of Iman, although it makes his Iman incomplete.

I have stated that neither of these two views reflects those of Jahm. Rather, whoever takes either stance has acknowledged that belief is not mere assent in the heart, nor does it consist of just one thing. Moreover, he [Abu Isḥāq] stated that Islamic law introduced changes into the meaning of belief that destroys the foundation for the claims of the Jahmites. And for this reason the leading thinkers among them, such as Jahm, al-Ṣāliḥī, Abu Ḥassan [al-Ash'arī], and Judge Abu Bakr [al-Bāqillānī] stated that Iman will not be denied a person except with the vanishing of knowledge from his heart.

In his chapter entitled "On the Mention of Names and Judgements," Abu al-Ma'ālī stated that our purpose in this chapter requires that we just make mention of the true nature of belief, for this is a matter on which there have been differing doctrines among Muslim thinkers. He then proceeded to relate the views of the Khārijites, the Mu'tazilites, and the Karrāmites. Abu al-Ma'ālī said that for the views of our followers, Iman is taṣdīq, *assent,* and our Shaykh Abu al-Ḥassan [al-Ash'arī], may Allah have mercy on him, is of the same opinion. But he had a different interpretation of taṣdīq, which he defined once as a knowledge of Allah's Existence, His Eternity, and His Deity. At another time he defined taṣdīq as a qawl, *utterance,* as part of one's inner self, except that it includes knowledge and it is not right to exist without it. This is its requirement; for taṣdīq and disbelief, truthfulness and untruthfulness apply most directly to things that one says, rather than to things one simply knows. Hence, taṣdīq is an utterance made inwardly that is then expressed outwardly with the tongue. This being the case, worship may be described as a kind of taṣdīq, since it is an expression of assent. Moreover, some of our own supporters have stated that taṣdīq is only realized through both verbal expression and truthfulness; if these two occur together, they represent a single instance of taṣdīq. Some of our followers have said that taṣdīq, *assent,* cannot be achieved except by acknowledging it with al-qawl, *speech*, and truthfulness simultaneously. If these two come together they form one taṣdīq.

Some of them have said taṣdīq can be defined as an abstention from what is prohibited. Hence, he [al-Ash'arī] did not consider iqrār, *verbal confession,* as one of the two pillars of Iman, but said that Iman is assent in the heart and abstention from what is prohibited, in accordance with the laws of Allah. Based on this, an

unbeliever may know Allah but does not abstain from what is prohibited, because he has abandoned the most important pillar of Iman.

Based on this interpretation, the Jews were aware of Allah and the prophecy of our Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh), yet in spite of this, they disbelieved stubbornly, unfairly, and jealously. As our Shaykh Abu al-Ḥassan said, of each individual whose unbelief we judge, we say: He does not know Allah to start with, and he does not know His Messenger or His religion.

His disciple Abu Qāsim al-Ansārī[14] stated that it is as if the meaning were that the Islamic teachings acknowledge neither his belief nor his knowledge. To this I have replied that the view we are discussing is not that which al-Ansārī summarized, but rather the view of those who stated that whoever obstinately resists Allah and His Messenger is an unbeliever according to Islamic teachings. Thus, sometimes unbelief is defined as the absence of inward belief, while at other times it is defined as obstinate resistance. In the latter case, one who obstinately resists Allah and His Messenger is considered an unbeliever according to Islamic teachings even if in his heart he possesses the essence of Iman, which is taṣdīq. He must be reckoned an unbeliever according to the teachings, even if he has belief like that of the Prophets and the Angels. Skilled proponents of this view, such as al-Ṣāliḥī, Abu al-Ḥassan, Judge Abu Bakr, and the followers of Jahm who preceded them, knew that this represented a contradiction that struck at the heart of their doctrine. As a result they added that no one shall be judged an unbeliever unless he ceases to have any belief in his heart. Moreover, they held that anyone judged by the teachings to be an unbeliever must be someone in whose heart there is no knowledge whatsoever of Allah and His Messenger. On account of this they were renounced by the vast majority of prudent Muslim theologians, who accused them of engaging in sophistry and clinging stubbornly to their own inconsistent opinions.

They argued in favor of their stance by citing Allah's saying: "You [Oh, Muḥammad] will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. For such

[14] Al-Anṣārī, Abu al-Qāsim Salmān Ibn Naṣir Ibn ʿImrān (?–512 A.H), was a scholar of fiqh and a commentator on the Qur'ān. [*Kitāb al-Iman* MZ, p. 144 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 200.]

has He written belief in their hearts . . ." (58:22). Concerning this verse they said that one may understand that whoever does not act in accordance with belief's requirements does not have belief written in his heart.

If they claim that according to his interpretation, those mentioned in this citation do not have belief of the sort that will be acknowledged and rewarded, or that they do not perform the duties of those professing to have belief, then we would reply: This is a general statement that may be applied more specifically only on the basis of evidence.

Against this, the author argues: This verse denies Iman of those who love those who resist Allah and His Messenger. Furthermore, those who do not love those who resist Allah and His Messenger, Allah will instill Iman in their hearts and will strengthen them with a spirit from Himself. This emphasizes the doctrine of the earlier Muslims that says that in order to have Iman, you must have love in your heart for Allah and His Messenger, and hatred for those who resist Allah and His Messenger. Also, this verse of the Qur'ān does not demonstrate that the knowledge that is in their hearts indicates that Muḥammad, who is the Messenger of Allah, will ascend and nothing will remain of him. Iman, which is considered obligatory, certainly is not mere knowledge and taṣdīq. In fact, it is both taṣdīq of the heart and work of the heart. Allah says: ". . . And strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein [forever]. Allah will be pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the party of Allah. Truly it is the party of Allah that will achieve Success" (58:22).

Allah has promised them Paradise, and it is agreed by all that the promises of Paradise go to those who adhere to the rules of Allah and abstain from what is prohibited. It is known that those whose hearts are filled with Iman and whom Allah strengthens with a spirit from Himself have already performed their religious duties, for which they deserve what Allah has promised the pure and the religious. This also indicates that sinners are not included in this promise. Also this verse of the Qur'ān indicates that no (true) believer would love the unbelievers. Some people who have taṣdīq in their hearts believe in the Messenger even though they still befriend the unbelievers. The pious ancestors said that abandoning overt obligations is evidence of a lack of belief that radiates out from the heart. But the elimination of the heart's work, which is the love of Allah and

His Messenger, and the fear of Allah, does not require that the heart be void of any taṣdīq. But according to them [the Ash'arites], if someone is proven by al-sharʿ *Islamic law* not to have Iman, this means that his heart is void of taṣdīq to start with. The majority of the knowledgeable consider this to be sophistry.

Ibn Fūrak,[15] on the authority of Abu al-Ḥassan [al-Ashʿarī], related the view that belief is the belief in the truthfulness of a report that someone has given, a belief so strong as to be tantamount to certain knowledge; however, it may also include a belief that is below the level of certainty. As for Iman in Allah, it is the belief in Allah's truthfulness, and this only applies to someone if he is certain about reporting Allah's truthfulness correctly. Moreover, this is so only if the individual is certain that Allah speaks. And the knowledge that Allah speaks depends on the knowledge that He is living, while the knowledge that He is living depends on the certainty that He acts; and the certainty that He acts depends in turn on certainty concerning the act itself, namely that the creation of the world is an act of Allah. He also said that belief includes the certainty that Allah is Almighty, and belief in His Almighty power; the certainty that Allah knows, and that Allah's knowledge exists; and that Allah wills and possesses a will. In other words, all the qualities one must know in order to be said to know Allah are included in the requirements of Iman.

To this we reply: This is among the questions on which al-Ashʿarī has held different views, namely, whether or not ignorance of certain attributes of Allah is tantamount to ignorance of the one possessing those attributes. Al-Ashʿarī himself took both positions [at different times]. However, the more valid of the two views—which is also the view accepted by the majority—is the second, namely, that ignorance of some attributes of a given entity does not necessarily entail ignorance of that entity itself. Moreover, one of the points on which al-Ashʿarī differed with Jahm concerned whether establishing the divine attributes is a requirement of Iman; for Jahm went to extremes in denying not only the divine attributes, but the divine names as well.

Abu al-Ḥassan said that what we heard from [the Prophet, pbuh] adds recognizable conditions to belief. To illustrate, belief should not be associated with whatever

[15] Ibn Fūrak, Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥassan Abu Bakr (?–406 A.H.), was a jurist of the Ashʿarite line of thinking and a theologian who worked on tafsīr. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, pp. 147–48.]

signals unbelief through what a person does or does not do. For example, the shar', *Islamic law,* dictates abstention from the worship of idols and stones. Hence, if someone does that, then such an action is an indication of his unbelief. Also, killing a prophet or making fun of him indicates one's unbelief. Also, not respecting the Book and the Ka'bah signals one's unbelief. So if anyone commits such actions [which are illegal acts] or if he abstains from deeds that are commanded, then this is a proof that taṣdīq, which is Iman itself, is lacking in his heart. Also, for everything that one commits by way of interpretation, which is contrary to Islamic belief, he will be considered an unbeliever, which is a further indication that he has lost the Iman which is in his heart. It is impossible to accuse someone of unbelief when he has both Iman and taṣdīq in his heart.

The author refutes this argument by saying that no doubt, al-Shāri', *the Legislator (the Prophet),* does not judge an individual to be an unbeliever if his heart is instilled with Iman, but to say that Iman is taṣdīq even if it is devoid of all the works of the heart, is considered wrong. Do you not see that the sharī'ah, *Islamic law,* passed judgement on his unbelief and the sharī'ah will not pass judgement of unbelief on a true and sincere believer? For this reason we say that the unbelief of Iblīs, *the devil,* was worse than that of every unbeliever. He [the devil] did not know Allah with His attributes at all, neither did he have a true and real inner Iman in Allah, even though he said he believed and worshiped. So, whenever we consider unbelievers—the Jews, Christians, Magians, and other unbelievers—they did not have true Iman in their hearts. Allah says: "If only they had believed in Allah, in the Prophet, and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them for friends and protectors . . ." (5:81); and He says: "But no, by your Lord, they can have no [real] belief, until they make you judge in all disputes between them . . ." (4:65). Allah makes these matters a condition for the confirmation of Iman, and it has been proven that Iman is the knowledge of conditions, without which there is no Iman.

Now if you say: He added further conditions to the knowledge of the heart in order for one to be judged a believer, then this would not represent Jahm's view. Rather, it would be consistent with the views of those who consider belief to be like prayer or going on pilgrimage. For although linguistically speaking, "prayer" means "supplication," and "making pilgrimage" means "intending a given destination," the lawgiver [the Prophet] has nevertheless appended further conditions to each of these. Such conditions may relate either to the judgment on such acts, or to both

such judgments and to the names that are used to refer to these acts. Moreover, the proponent of this view acknowledged that no one may be judged a believer according to the standards of the Book and the Sunnah merely on the basis of taṣdīq of the heart. Rather, the other conditions mentioned are also necessary. For this reason, it is not possible to declare a fāsiq, *habitual sinner,* to be a believer unless there is evidence on the basis of which to do so. Moreover, that evidence cannot be a mere statement on the part of such an individual that he possesses taṣdīq of the heart. Those who define belief as taṣdīq of the heart say: No unbeliever in Hell, be it Satan or anyone else, has the least taṣdīq in Allah. For as Allah says: "And, when they will dispute in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant: 'Indeed! We followed you, can you then take from us some portion of the Fire'? Those who were arrogant will say: 'We are all [together] in this [Fire]! Indeed, Allah has judged between [His] slaves'" (40:47–48). Allah also says: "The unbelievers will be led to Hell in a crowd until, when they arrive there, its gates will be opened. And its Keepers will say, 'Did not Messengers come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing to you the Signs of your Lord, and warning you of the Meeting of this Day of yours?' Their answer is: 'True: but the Decree of Punishment has been proved true against the unbelievers!'" (39:71). The unbelievers confess that the Messengers came to them, rehearsed to them the signs of their Lord, and warned them of the meeting of this day of theirs. Thus, they knew of Allah, His Messenger, and the Hereafter. But in the Hereafter they are considered unbelievers. Allah also says: ". . . Every time a group is cast therein, its keepers will ask: 'Did no Warner come to you?' Their answer is: 'Yes, indeed; a Warner did come to us, but we rejected him and said, Allah never sent down any [Message] . . .'" (67:8–9). The unbelievers rejected the Warner and said that Allah never sent down any Message. But in the Hereafter, they will know Allah, His Messenger, and the Hereafter. Allah further says: "If you could see when they are confronted with their Lord! He will say: 'Is not this the truth?' Their answer is: 'Yes, by our Lord!' He will say: 'Taste you then the penalty, because you rejected the Punishment of what you were ungrateful about'" (6:30). Allah also says: "And the agony of death comes in truth. This is what you have been avoiding" (50:19), until where He says, as a continuation: "And the Trumpet will be blown, that will be the Day whereof a Warning [has been given]. And every person will come forth along with an [Angel] to drive [him] and an [Angel] to bear witness. [It will be said to the sinners]: 'Indeed you were heedless of this, now We have removed your covering, and sharp is your sight this Day'" (50:20–22). There are many other

verses in the Qur'ān which indicate that in the Hereafter the unbelievers will know their Lord. Thus, if Iman is the mere knowledge of Allah, then they [the unbelievers] are considered believers in the Hereafter. However, they [the Ash'arites] were correct in saying that Iman is not beneficial in the Hereafter because one is rewarded for his Iman in this life; but if Iman is the mere knowledge of Allah, then this fact remains unchanged. For, if works are not part of Iman, then someone knowledgeable [about Allah] in the Hereafter would not lose his Iman. Indeed they [the Ash'arites] used to claim that an unbeliever when he dies does not have any taṣdīq in his heart about Allah. However, there are many verses in the Qur'ān that indicate that unbelievers know Allah in this life. Even Pharaoh, who overtly rejected Iman, was, in his heart, admitting this fact. Allah says: "And they rejected those Signs wrongfully and arrogantly, though their souls were convinced thereof . . ." (27:14). Moses said to Pharaoh, as in the following verse. Allah says: "You know well that these things have been sent down by none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth as eye-opening evidence . . ." (17:102), even though Pharaoh was not a believer. Indeed, Moses said, as in the following verse Allah says: ". . . Deface our Lord, the features of their wealth, and send hardness to their hearts, so they will not believe until they see the grievous penalty" (10:88). Allah also says: ". . . Accepted is your prayer [Oh, Moses and Aaron]! . . ." (10:89). And when Pharaoh said that in the following verse, Allah says: ". . . I believe that there is no god except Him Whom the Children of Israel believe in . . ." (10:90) and "Ah now But a little while before was though in rebellion!—And you were one of the corrupt ones" (10:91). It is clear that Allah described Pharaoh as someone who was disobedient but did not have inward knowledge. Allah says: "But Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger [Moses] . . ." (73:16). The same applies to Iblīs. Allah says: "So the Angels prostrated themselves, all of them together. Not so Iblīs: he was haughty, and became one of the unbelievers" (38:73–74). Thus, Allah did not describe Iblīs as unknowledgeable but as reluctant, arrogant, and disobedient to the Command. Indeed, Allah says that unbelievers admit that Allah is the Creator in many verses, such as: "If you were to question them, 'Who created them?' They would be sure to reply, 'They were created by Allah! . . .'" (43:87).

One might reply by adding: If you say that belief is taṣdīq in the heart, or the tongue, or both, then is this a mujmal, *general* or *overall,* sort of taṣdīq, or does it need to be more detailed? For if someone believed, for example, that

Muḥammad was the Messenger of Allah, yet did not know Allah's attributes, would he be a believer or not? And if someone were judged to be a believer, one might say: If he then learned of these attributes yet disbelieved what he had heard, then by agreement among Muslim thinkers, he would not be considered a believer in this respect. And in such a case, some instances of belief would be considered more complete than others. However, if such a person is said not to be a believer, then we are required not to consider anyone a believer until he comes to know every detail of everything the Prophet ever said. But the fact is, of course, that the majority of the Muslim communities likewise do not know every detail of what the Messenger taught, and one Muslim's belief is not considered superior to that of another's except by virtue of the individuals steadfastness over time.

Abu al-Maʿālī said that someone might say: your assumptions [e.g., that everyone's belief is equal, or that belief is merely inward belief and or lip profession] require you to consider the belief of an inveterate sinner as equal to the belief of the Prophet himself (pbuh). And to this we would add: One person's belief may be considered superior to that of someone else due to the steadfastness of his taṣdīq and Allah's protection of him from doubts and misgivings; however, taṣdīq is a nonessential characteristic that does not endure for most individuals. The Prophet (pbuh) had belief that was continuous and uninterrupted, whereas for others, belief may be constant at times, and waver at others. And while all levels of taṣdīq were possessed by the Prophet, others possess only some of them, which means that the Prophet's belief was superior to that of others. Hence, if one describes belief as being capable of increase and decrease, then he has spoken truly. Thus this is the basis on which, according to them, the Prophet considered one person's belief to be superior to another's. And of course, this view is utterly false in numerous respects, as we have demonstrated elsewhere.

Chapter Ten

The Opinion of Al-Bāqillāni On Iman and Islam

Later thinkers who supported Jahm's view on belief included al-Qāḍī Abu Bakr [al-Bāqillān], who said that if someone were to ask: What is Islam to you? We would reply by saying that Islam means inqiyād, *compliance,* and istislām, *submission.* Therefore, every act of obedience in which an individual submits to Allah's way and submits to His command is Islam. As for Iman, *belief,* it is one of the khiṣāl, *attributes,* of Islam. Every Iman is Islam, but not every Islam is Iman. If someone were then to ask: Why have you described the meaning of Islam in this way? We would reply that this description is based on Allah's saying in the Qur'ān. Allah says: "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith; but you [only] say, We have submitted our wills to Allah . . .'" (49:14). By saying this, Allah denies that these people have belief and affirms Islam to them—that is, that they had complied with His Ways and submitted to Him. We read elsewhere in the Qur'ān that Allah says: ". . . And offer you peace . . ." (4:90). Everyone who has submitted to something is secure and in a state of peace, although this term is used primarily to speak of someone who has submitted to Allah and to His Prophet.

As for myself [Ibn Taymiyyah], I hold that the view mentioned above, besides being untrue and in conflict with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, is also full of contradictions. For they considered belief to be an attribute of Islam. Moreover, all acts of obedience are considered to be Islam, while the only Iman included therein is taṣdīq, *assent.* As for the Murji'ites, although they held that belief encompasses Islam, they also held that belief is merely assent in the heart and expression of the tongue. The Jahmites, on the other hand, defined Iman as being no more than taṣdīq in the heart, so that neither making the Shahādatān, *two*

Confessions, nor prayers, nor giving zakah, nor any other outward gestures are considered to be part of Iman. We have already discussed what both Allah and His Messenger made clear, namely that Islam is part of Iman such that no one may be a believer unless he is also a Muslim. Iman in turn is part of Iḥsan, *perfection (of religion);* thus no one could be a muḥsin, *man of Iḥsan,* unless he is a believer.

As for the contradictions referred to above, what I mean is this. If it is claimed that Iman is one of the attributes of Islam, then whoever has belief will have some attribute of Islam, but not Islam in its totality, which it is one's duty to have. And in such a case, a person will be a Muslim only when he has all of the attributes of Islam. Likewise, a person can only be a believer when he possesses Iman in its totality. Hence, whoever has some belief [according to this view] will not be a believer; in fact, he will be considered to have no belief at all. And the same would apply to whether one is a complete Muslim or not. Every Iman is Islam, but not every Islam is Iman. However, if they mean by this that every instance of Iman represents the Islam which Allah commands, then this is in conflict with their statement that belief is only one attribute of Islam, but not coextensive with it. On the other hand, perhaps what they mean is that every instance of belief is also an instance or expression of Islam in the sense of a particular act of obedience to Allah is part of the Islam that is required of us. However, if this were the case, then there would be as many Islams as there are acts of obedience. The two Testimonies of the creed would, in and of themselves, be Islam; prayers alone would be Islam; zakah would be Islam; as would every dirham one gives to a needy person, every prostration, every day one fasted, every word of praise to Allah in prayer, and so on.

Furthermore, if one can only be a Muslim by doing everything that has been labeled as Islam, then al-fussāq, *major sinners,* must likewise not be considered Muslims, even though they are considered believers. Based on the position such people have adopted, those whom they consider to be believers with perfect Iman are not Muslims, which is even worse than the view of the Karrāmites. It also follows that major sinners among the People of the Qiblah are not to be considered Muslims, a position more odious than the views espoused by the Khārijites, the Muʿtazilites, and others. And if we look upon every act of obedience, be it a religious duty or a supererogatory act of devotion, to be Islam then anyone who neglects acts of obedience is thereby not a Muslim.

But this is inconsistent with the argument they have advanced based on Allah's words to the Bedouin Arabs: "... You believe not but you only say we submit..." (49:14), thereby affirming that they were Muslims while denying that they had Iman. But to exclude major sinners from being Muslims, if they do in fact thus exclude them, is a more heinous offense than excluding them from Iman. By so doing they fall into an error worse than that for which they have condemned the Muʿtazilites. For according to the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, to deny that someone is a believer is more momentous than to deny that he is a Muslim, since Iman in both the Book and the Sunnah is greater. Perhaps they would say that everyone who performs some act of obedience will be called a Muslim. If so, however, then anyone who engaged in some act of obedience, yet did not confess the Muslim creed, would still be a Muslim, as would anyone who believed in his heart yet did not voice his belief with his tongue, since Iman as they understand it is Islam, so that whoever has belief also has Islam. Likewise, someone may be a believer even if he simply utters the two testimonies without engaging in any good works whatsoever.

Based on the Qurʾānic verse that reads: "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You believe not but you only say we submit...'" (49:14). They noted that Allah denied that these people had belief while affirming that they were Muslims. However, one might see this verse as evidence against their views rather than in favor of them. For when Allah affirms their being Muslims, yet without having belief, this indicates that Iman is not, in fact, part of Islam. For if it were, then these people could not have been Muslims without belief. They might argue that what they actually meant to say was that Allah affirmed that they had "a kind of Islam," since in their view, every act of obedience called for by Islam is a kind of Islam. However, in this case we would reiterate the objection we raised above to the effect that if this were the case, then every day one fasts, every dirham one gives in alms, and so on is likewise to be considered Islam.

They said that every believer is a Muslim, but that not every Muslim is a believer. Moreover, it is claimed that this position is based on the use of the terms Muslim and "believer" in an absolute sense, whereas when they are spoken of in more specific terms, belief is viewed as one attribute or aspect of Islam and religion, but not Islam or religion in their entirety. For Islam is submission to Allah by undertaking all acts of obedience that He commands. Belief is the weightiest attribute of Islam, while Islam comprises all acts of obedience through which one

is lead toward Allah, including Iman, taṣdīq, religious duties, and supererogatory acts of devotion. However, none of the various acts of obedience will be efficacious in bringing one closer to Allah unless it is preceded by belief. As some have observed: the word al-dīn, *religion,* is derived from the word al-tadayyun, *indebtedness, piety or religiousness,* which is close in meaning to Islam.

To this I would reply: If they truly hold this position, then their claim that every believer is a Muslim but that not every Muslim is a believer is in conflict with this. For the Muslim is one who is obedient to Allah, but no obedience is efficacious without belief. Hence, it is impossible for anyone to have performed even the most minor act of obedience pertaining to Islam except as a believer. Every Muslim must be a believer whether what one means by Islam is the performance of all required acts of obedience, or the performance of simply one of them, for in neither case would these acts have any effect if they were done without belief. Also, this verse [mentioned above], is evidence against their position rather than in favor of it.

With regard to the claim that every believer is a Muslim, if by "belief" what they mean is the taṣdīq of the heart alone, then even the man who neither makes the two testimonies of the creed nor does any of the works that have been commanded is still a Muslim. However, this is known with certainty to be false with regard to the religion of Islam. In fact, even most Jews and Christians know that no one is a Muslim unless he utters the two testimonies of faith or mā yaqūmu maqāmuhumā, *what could stand for their equivalent.*[1] They held that every believer is a Muslim, including someone who has neither uttered the two testimonies nor performed any of the other five pillars of Islam, since such an individual [in their view] is obedient inwardly; however, this is not the Muslim recognized in the Book and the Sunnah, nor that recognized by either the earlier or the later authorities on Islam. Moreover, in support of their claims they cited the above verse in which they note that Allah affirmed that they were Muslims without their having belief. Whoever did not know the reality of the situation

[1] The two Testimonies must be spoken aloud by a person as a Testimony of his sincerity about entering into the realm of Islam. Normally Muslims, in the practice of their religion, utter the two Confessions on a regular basis during prayer and on other occasions. "Equivalent" here refers to the case of those who are either deaf or dumb or have other afflictions preventing them from saying the two confessions aloud. Therefore, a substitute will be accepted from them if it is offered with good intention

would think that this represented the view of the pious ancestors, which is supported by the Book and the Sunnah, and that according to these authorities, every believer is a Muslim though not every Muslim is a believer. However, there is a world of difference between the two [i.e., between this view on one hand, and that of the pious ancestors on the other]. The views of the Muʿtazilites on Iman and Islam were much closer [to those of the pious ancestors] than are those of the Jahmites. However, the Muʿtazilites' belief that the People of the Qiblah abide eternally in Hell was further away from the teaching of the pious ancestors than the views of the Jahmites. Later Islamic authorities, who supported Jahm's view on the matter of belief, expounded the teaching of the pious ancestors on this question as well as on that of istithnā', *making the exception,* and on the absence of the Iman that is in the heart wherever the Qur'ān denies its presence. All of this is superficially consistent with the views of the pious ancestors; however, in reality their views are utterly in conflict with the pious ancestors' teachings. In fact, nothing could be further from the views they actually held. The views of the Muʿtazilites, the Khārijites, and the Karrāmites concerning the terms Iman and Islam were closer to the views of the pious ancestors than are those of the Jahmites. However, the Muʿtazilites and the Khārijites claimed that disobedient people shall abide eternally in Hell, which is the furthest one could depart from the view of the pious ancestors. They [the Muʿtazilites and the Khārijites] were closer to the pious ancestors concerning Iman and Islam yet farther from them in the judgments at which they arrived. In this respect the Jahmites were closer to the pious ancestors, since they held that major sinners do not abide eternally in Hell. Nevertheless, their views on the true nature of Islam and Iman and their realities represented the greatest possible departure from the Book and the Sunnah, while their [teachings] were more in conflict with reason, Islamic law, and the rules of the Arabic language than those of any other sect.

Chapter Eleven

Absolute Iman Requires Works

There is a clear indication in the Qur'ān that absolute Iman requires works. Allah says: "Only those believe in Our Verses who, when they are recited to them, fall down in adoration, and celebrate the praises of their Lord, nor are they [ever] puffed up with pride" (32:15).Then He illustrates the fact that absolute Iman requires works. Thus, He does not acknowledge Iman as belonging to those who, when reminded by the Qur'ān, do not perform the required prostration, for prostration during the five prayers is obligatory. However, prostration during recitation is controversial. Some may use the above verse to validate their point of view [that prostration is obligatory]. However, this is not the place to discuss this issue. Likewise, Allah says in the following verses: "Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not but strive with their belongings and their lives . . ." (49:15); and ". . . The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts . . ." (8:2); and "Only those are believers, who believe in Allah and His Messenger; when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave . . ." (24:62); and also Allah says: "May Allah forgive you [Oh, Muḥammad]. Why did you grant them exemption until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had proved them liars? Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day ask you for no exemption from fighting with their goods and persons. And Allah knows well those who do their duty. Only those who ask you for exemption believe not in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt, so that they are tossed in their doubts to and fro" (9:43–45).

These verses are like what Allah says in the following verse: "You [Oh, Muḥammad] will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day,

making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger . . ."(58:22). And He also says: "If only they had believed in Allah and the Prophet [Muḥammad] and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them [the unbelievers] as protectors . . ." (5:81). Allah shows that Iman has requirements and counter-requirements. It requires fulfilling the requirements and rejecting the counter-requirements, which requires affirming its requirements and negating its counter-requirements. Among some of the aspects of its counter-requirements are befriending those who oppose Allah and His Messenger and asking permission from the Messenger to abandon the struggle against the unbelievers. Indeed, it is clear that asking his [the Prophet's] permission stems from those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, as indicated in His saying: ". . . Allah knows well the righteous ones" (9:44). Indeed, the righteous ones are the believers.

Further evidence is found in the following sayings of the Prophet (pbuh): "The fornicator who fornicates is no longer a believer as long as he commits it"; and "He is not a believer whose neighbor feels insecure from his injurious conduct"; and "You will not believe until you love each other"; and "None of you is a believer until I am more beloved to him than his son, his father, and all of mankind"; and also his saying: "No one is a believer from among you until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself"; and "He who cheats us is not from among us, and he who attacks us with weapons is not from among us."

Chapter Twelve

The Meaning of Conditioned Iman When Associated With Other Terms

If the word Iman is used in a conditioned sense by being associated either with Islam or with righteous deeds, it may unambiguously refer to Iman that is in the heart. For example, when the following two phrases are conjoined, "those who believe and work righteousness," both these righteous deeds are implied in Iman. But when they are joined with Iman, two possible interpretations arise. One is that the conjunction of the deeds (which are specific) with Iman (which is absolute) indicates that Iman implies deeds as well as other matters. The other interpretation is that Iman is peculiar to the heart and does not include righteous deeds. The same is true of other words in general, with varying gradations of an absolute or a conditional sense. Examples are the words "good" and "evil" if used as in the sayings of Allah. Allah says: ". . . He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong . . ." (7:157); and "You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong . . ." (3:110). Allah also says: "The believers, men and women, are friends of each other, they enjoin good and forbid evil . . ." (9:71). This indicates that the word "good" encompasses all that is good, and that the word "evil" implies all that is wrong. However, if the words "good" and "evil" are joined to something more specific, as in the following saying of Allah, then they could be joined with what is more specific. Allah says: "In most of their secret talks there is no good: but if one exhorts to a deed of charity or good or conciliation between people . . ." (4:114). The words "good," "charity," and "conciliation" are differentiated from each other in the same way that the words Iman and deeds are. The same token applies to Allah's saying: ". . . For prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds . . ." (29:45), wherein He differentiates between shameful and unjust deeds, as in His saying: ". . . and forbid evil . . ." (9:71). And then He mentions, along with evil

deeds, two other concepts: justice and perfection. Allah says: "Indeed Allah enjoins justice and perfection in performing [religious duties], giving to kinsfolk, and forbidding evil [deeds], what is wrong and acts of oppression . . ." (16:90). The word "oppression" stands in contrast to the two positive concepts mentioned in the verse. Furthermore, in this verse, the word munkar, *evil deeds,* is cited along with "oppression" and "what is wrong."

Another term that belongs in this discussion is al-ʿibādah, *worship.* When there is an absolute command to worship Allah, that worship includes everything Allah commands us to do—for example, depending on Allah and seeking Allah's aid. Such actions are implied, as in the following Qurʾānic verses. Allah says "I have created both jinn and humans only to worship Me" (51:57). Allah also says: "And worship Allah and associate nothing with Him in worship . . ."[1] (4:36); and "Oh people worship your Lord who created you . . ." (2:21); and "Indeed we have sent down the Book to you [Oh, Muḥammad] in truth: so worship Allah by doing religious deeds sincerely" (39:2); and "Say [Oh, Muḥammad] 'I worship only Allah by doing religious deeds sincerely for His Sake only'" (39:14); and "Say [Oh, Muḥammad] 'Do you order me to worship other than Allah, Oh you ignorant ones?'" (39:64). The term "worship" might be associated with other words as well, as in the verses which read: "You we worship and You we seek help from" (1:5); and ". . . So worship Him [Oh, Muḥammad] and put your trust in Him . . ." (11:123); He also says: "And worship Allah and fear Him and obey me" (71:3). Likewise, when the phrase, ṭāʿat Allah, *obedience to Allah,* occurs alone it includes everything that Allah commands. Also included within this is obedience to the Messenger. Similar to these is the term al-taqwā, *piety* or *fear of Allah,* which encompasses doing all that is commanded and abandoning everything that is forbidden.

According to Ṭalaq Ibn Ḥabīb, taqwā, *piety,* is defined as "acting in obedience to Allah by the light of Allah and in hopes of Allah's mercy, as well as abandoning all disobedience to Allah, by the light of Allah, and in fear of Allah's retribution." This is consistent with the verse that reads: Allah says: "Indeed the pious ones will be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers [Paradise]. In a seat of Truth [i.e., Paradise], near the Omnipotent King" (54:54–55). This term, taqwā, may also be associated

[1] In the MI.2 edition (p. 155) this portion of this verse is repeated twice. It is obviously a simple typographical error.

with other concepts, as in the following verses. Allah says: "... And whosoever fears Allah will make a way for him to get out. He will provide him from [sources] he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him ..." (65:2–3); and "... Indeed, he who fears Allah with obedience to Him, and is patient, then surely, Allah makes not the reward of the good-doers to be lost" (12:90); He also says: "... And fear Allah through Whom you claim your mutual [rights], and the wombs [that bore you] ..." (4:1); and "... Fear Allah and speak always the Truth" (33:70); and "... Fear Allah and be with those who are true [in words and deeds]" (9:119); and "... Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of being Muslims" (3:102); and so forth.

Thus Allah's saying: "... Fear Allah and be with those who are true [in words and deeds]" (9:119) is similar to His saying: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend of that which He has made you trustees of ..." (57:7). Allah also says: "The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of belief. Each one [of them] believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. We make no distinction [they say] between one and another of His Messengers. And they say: 'We hear, and we obey'" (2:285), [shameful deeds] are implied in unjust deeds. Their saying, 'we hear, and we obey' is conjoined with Iman [each one of the believers believes in Allah and His Angels] as well as the phrase "directed to the right," associated with fearing Allah in the previous verse, and it is well known that the phrase "fear of Allah," if used alone, implies the "word directed to the right." Likewise, the word Iman, if used alone, implies hearing and obeying Allah and His Messenger. Similarly Allah says: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger ... :" (57:7). If the term "belief in Allah" is used in an absolute sense in connection with Muḥammad's community of belief, then it includes belief in Muḥammad as the Messenger of Allah, based on the verse that reads: "... Each one [of them] believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers ..." (2:285). We may conclude that if we speak in an absolute manner of belief in Allah, it implies within it belief in such subordinate realities as those mentioned here [namely, Allah's Angels, His Books and His Messengers]. The same truth is affirmed in the following verses. Allah says: "And those who believe in that which has been revealed to you [Oh, Muḥammad], and in that which was revealed before you ..." (2:4); and Allah also says: "Say [Oh, Muslims], "we believe in Allah and that which has been revealed to us and that which has been revealed to Abraham ..."" (2:136).

We may conclude, based on the following saying of Allah: ". . . So believe in Allah and His Messenger [Muḥammad], the Prophet who could neither read or write . . ." (7:158), that belief in Allah's Messenger includes belief in all His Books and Prophets. Similarly, Allah says: "... And believe too in His Messenger, He will give you a double portion of His Mercy . . ." (57:28). He also says: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend of that whereof he has made you trustees . . :" (57:7). This indicates that belief in Allah and His Messenger implies belief in all these related promises and commands. The command to spend one's wealth as Allah's stewards is also found in another verse. Allah says: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger . . ." (57:7), just as the command to speak rightly is implied in the verse which reads: ". . . And indeed, We have recommended the people of the Scripture before you . . ." (4:131).

The same applies to the word al-birr, *righteousness,* which, if used in an absolute sense, implies all of what Allah commands, as illustrated in the following verses. Allah says: "As for the righteous ones, they will be blessed; and the wicked, they will be in the Fire" (82:13–14); and ". . . It is a virtue if you fear Allah . . ." (2:189); and "... But it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Prophets; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for the orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts you have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain [or suffering] and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of piety" (2:177). The word al-birr, *righteousness,* if used in an absolute sense, implies al-taqwā, *fearing Allah.* Likewise, al-taqwā, *fearing Allah,* if used in an absolute sense, implies righteousness. But it is no longer the case if they are used in conjunction with each other, as in Allah's saying: ". . . Help you one another in righteousness and fearing Allah . . ." (5:2).

Likewise, the word ithm, *sin,* when used in an absolute sense, encompasses all sins and misdeeds. At times this term is associated with the concept of al-ʿudwān, *aggression,* as in the verse: ". . . And do help one another in sin and aggression . . ." (5:2). The term dhunūb, *sins,* when used in an absolute sense, includes the neglect of any duty and the commission of any forbidden act, as may be seen in Allah's saying, ". . . Oh, My slaves who have transgressed against themselves! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, indeed Allah forgives all sins . . ." (39:53). The same word may be found in conjunction with other related concepts. For example,

Allah says: "... Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions ..." (3:147). With respect to the term al-hudā, *guidance,* when used in an absolute sense, it includes both the knowledge with which Allah sent His Messenger, as well as acting on the basis of such knowledge. For this reason it comprises everything that Allah has commanded, as Allah says: "Guide us to the Straight Way" (1:6), which is a prayer both to know the truth with certainty and to be enabled to act on it. Similarly, what is meant in the following verse: "... Guidance belongs to the God-fearing" (2:2), is that such individuals both have knowledge of what Allah's guidance consists of and act based on that knowledge, on account of which they have prospered spiritually. The concept of guidance appears also in the words spoken by those in Paradise. Allah says: "... Praise be to Allah Who guides us for this . . ." (7:43), for Allah has guided them by inspiring them with beneficial knowledge and the wherewithal to do good works. The notion of guidance may also be linked with that of al-ijtibā', *choosing* or *election.* Allah says: ". . . We chose them, and We guided them to a straight path" (6:87); and "[He was] thankful for His Graces. He chose him and guided him . . ." (16:121); and ". . . Allah chooses for Himself whom He will, and guides unto Himself who turns to Him in repentance and obedience" (42:13); and "He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth [Islam] . . ." (48:28). In this last verse, "guidance" refers to belief, while "the religion of truth" refers to Islam. And if the term "guidance" is used in an absolute sense, then the term "belief" is used in a similar fashion; it includes both true guidance and adherence to Islam.

As for the word al-ḍalāl, *error (i.e., to go astray),* when used in an absolute sense, it refers to anyone who has strayed from right guidance, whether deliberately or out of ignorance. Moreover, such a person must suffer torment. Allah says: "Indeed, they found their fathers on the wrong path, so they [too] made haste to follow in their footsteps" (37:69–70); and He also says: ". . . And they will say: 'Our Lord! Indeed, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones and they mislead us from the [right] way. Our Lord! Give them double torment and curse them with a mighty curse!'" (33:67–68). Allah also says: ". . . Then whoever follows My guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery" (20:123). This term may also be associated with the concepts of al-g͟hayy, *transgression,* and al-g͟haḍab, *wrath.* Allah says: "Your companion [Muḥammad] has neither gone astray nor has erred" (53:2); and "The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not(the way) of those who earned Your anger nor of those who went

astray" (1:7); and "Indeed the criminals are in error and will burn in the Hellfire in the Hereafter" (54:47). The word ghayy, likewise, if used in an absolute manner, includes any act of disobedience against Allah. This may be seen in Allah's saying concerning Satan: ". . . I shall mislead them all. Except Your chosen, slaves among them" (15:39–40). Moreover, it may also be paired with the word ḍalāl, *to go astray,* as in the verse: "Your companion [Muḥammad] has neither gone astray nor has erred" (53:2).

Similarly, if the word faqīr, *poor,* is used in an absolute way, implies miskīn, *needy,* which in turn, if it is applied in an absolute sense, it implies "poor," as in the following sayings of Allah: ". . . But if you conceal them [acts of charity], and make them reach those [really] in need, that is best for you . . ." (2:271); and ". . . For expiation, feed ten needy persons . . ." (5:89). But if both words are joined together, they have distinct meanings, as illustrated in Allah's saying: "Alms are for the poor and the needy . . ." (9:60).

With regard to those nouns whose significations differ according to whether they are used in a muqayyad, *qualified,* versus a muṭlaq, *absolute,* manner, or in tajrīd, *isolation,* versus in iqtirān, *conjunction,* with another word, one finds at times, when one of two words that were previously paired is used in isolation from the other, it takes on a more inclusive meaning than it did when it was paired. Examples of words thus used in context with one another are: Iman, *belief,* and maʿrūf, *commendable work;* al-ʿamal, *work,* and al-ṣidq, *truthfulness;* or al-munkar, *bad act,* al-faḥshāʾ, *abomination,* and al-baghī, *injustice;* and so on. At other times, however, two or more words are equally general or specific, as are Iman, *belief,* birr, *piety,* and taqwā, *righteousness;* or the words faqīr, *poor,* and miskīn, *needy.* Any of these sets of words, when employed in an absolute sense, take on whatever meaning is borne by the other. The same applies to the term tilāwah, *recitation;* if this word is used in an absolute sense, as in the following verse. Allah says: "Those to whom We gave the Book recite it as it should be recited . . ." (2:121). This verse includes the sense of carrying out the recitation. This is how it has been interpreted by the Companions of the Prophet and their Successors, among them Ibn Masʿūd, Ibn ʿAbbās, Mujāhid, and others, who said "The clause yatlūnahu ḥaqqa tilāwatihi, *recited is as it should be recited,* means that they follow it [the Book] as it ought to be followed, allowing that which it permits and banning what it forbids, obeying those commands whose meanings

are clear and unequivocal, and accepting on belief those words in it which are obscure to them." Others have said that recitation here means "carrying out" or "following," as in the verse: "And by the Moon as it follows it [the sun]" (91:2). Hence, it includes those who have not read the Book. Still others have stated that for someone to undertake a perfect reading or recitation [of the Book], he must understand its meaning and conduct himself on that basis. As Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī[2] said: "Those who used to teach us the Qur'ān related to us that ʿUthmān Ibn ʿAffān, ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd, and others, whenever the Prophet (pbuh) taught them ten verses of the Qur'ān, would not go on to any other verses until they had mastered both their meanings and their applications. Hence they used to say: "We have memorized the Qur'ān, gained understanding of its meaning, and learned how to put it into practice."

In the verse quoted above, in which Allah says: "Those to whom We gave the Book recite it as it should be recited . . ." (2:121), the word "Book" has been interpreted by some to mean the Qur'ān, and by others to refer to the Torah [i.e., the Jewish scriptures]. Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr related through a reliable chain of authority that according to Ibn ʿAbbās, the phrase "they recite it as it should be recited" means that they follow it perfectly. Another interpretation of the same phrase, also attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās, is that they permitted what it [the Book] allows, they forbade what it disallows, and they did not distort its meanings. According to the view attributed to Qatādah, its meaning is that they believed in it; those who believed in it were Muḥammad's Companions, who believed in Allah's Book, permitting what it allows, forbidding what it disallows, and practicing what it teaches. It has been mentioned to us that Ibn Masʿūd said: "Its correct recitation means that one permits what it allows, forbids what it disallows, recites it in the way in which it was revealed by Allah, and does not distort its meaning." According to the view attributed to al-Ḥassan [al-Baṣrī]: "they recited it with a true recitation" means that they obeyed all its teachings whose meanings are clear and accepted, on belief, those teachings that are of likeness to each other, entrusting all those parts whose meanings are unclear to them to the One who has complete knowledge. And according to the view attributed to Mujāhid, it means that they followed it perfectly and also, according to him, practiced it fully.

[2] Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (?–74 A.H.) was born during the Prophet's lifetime and studied the Qur'ān from the Caliphs ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. He was also a scholar of ḥadith. [Al-Fihrist, vol. 2, page 1104 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, page 162.]

The term "recitation" may also be used in context with other words as well, as may be seen in the following verse. Allah says: "Recite [Oh, Muḥammad] what has been revealed to you of the Book, and offer prayers. Indeed, prayer prevents abomination and wicked deeds . . ." (29:45). According to Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and others, "recitation of the Book" means practicing complete obedience to Allah, besides which specific mention is made of prayer, as Allah says: "And as to those who hold fast to the Book and offer prayers perfectly . . ." (7:170); and ". . . So worship Me, and offer prayers perfectly for My remembrance" (20:14). Similarly, the phrase ittibāʿu mā anzala Allah, *following what Allah has revealed,* encompasses all acts of obedience, as in the following verses. Allah says: "Follow what has been sent down unto to you from your Lord, and follow not any protectors who order you to associate partners besides Him . . ." (7:3); and ". . . Then whoever follows My guidance shall neither go astray nor fall into misery" (20:123); and "And indeed, this is My Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not other paths for they will separate you away from His Path . . ." (6:153). This term [recitation] may also be used in context with other, related words, as in the verses that read: "And this is a blessed Book which We have sent down, so follow it and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy" (6:155); and "Follow what has been inspiring to you [Oh, Muḥammad] from your Lord; no god is worthy to be worshiped except Him and turn aside those who join others and worship with Him" (6:106); and "And [Oh, Muḥammad], follow the inspiration sent you, and be patient until Allah gives judgement. And He is the best of judges" (10:109).

Similar to this is the term al-Abrār, *the Righteous Ones,* which if used in an absolute sense implies everyone who fears Allah, whether he follows a middle course or is among the foremost. Allah says: "As for the Righteous Ones, they will be blessed; and the wicked ones, they will be in the Fire" (82:13–14). But it is no longer the case if the term "Righteous Ones" is joined to "those nearest [to Allah]." Allah says: ". . . Indeed the record of the Righteous Ones is [preserved] in ʿIlliyyūn. And what will make you know what ʾIlliyyūn is? [There is] a register [fully] inscribed, to which bear witness those nearest [to Allah]" (82:18–21).

To best understand the denotations and connotations of the words of the Book and the Sunnah, one has to take into consideration their conditioned and absolute usages as well as the general and specific usage of their meanings. For in this way, many controversies will be resolved, one of which is the issue of Islam and Iman. This was the first controversial question over which people differed in the

interpretation of the Book and the Sunnah, to the point where they accused each other of being unbelievers. And they fought with each other, as has been explained elsewhere. What we aim at is explaining the words of Allah and His Messenger in a way that indicates that guidance is received from the words of Allah and His Messenger. This can be accomplished by citing only the sayings that are based on the Words of Allah and on the authoritative sayings of His Messenger [excluding those with weak attestation].

An illustration of this point is the interpretation of the pious ancestors and Muslim jurists of the Sunnah of the word Iman. At one time they said that Iman is: "a saying and work;" at another time, "a saying, a work, and an intent;" and at still another time, "a saying, a work, an intent, and a following of the Sunnah;" and also, "a saying with the tongue, a belief in the heart, and an act by the parts of the body." Indeed, all these interpretations are correct. For if they said: "Iman means saying and work," then an act of speech, if used freely, implies the action of both heart and tongue; and works imply both overt and covert deeds. With regard to what is referred to by the terms kalām, *speech,* and qawl, *saying,* when used in an absolute sense, four positions have been taken. The position adopted by the pious ancestors, scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, and the majority of other people is that such terms refer to both a saying itself and the meaning it bears, just as the term al-insān, *person,* refers to both the spirit and the body. Others, however, have held that what these terms refer to is nothing but the saying alone, whereas the meaning does not form part of the referent. Rather, the meaning is the signification that the referent bears or conveys, rather than being part of the referent itself. This second view was held by many scholastic theologians among the Muʿtazilites and others, as well as some Orthodox Muslims. It is also the view adopted by grammarians, whose profession concerns itself with words [and matters relating to them]. According to the third view, these terms refer only to the meaning. Moreover, when one uses the term kalām, *speech,* in an absolute manner to refer to the utterance itself, one is using it figuratively. It is also the view held by Ibn Kullāb and his followers. As for the fourth view, it holds that the terms kalām, *speech,* and qawl, *saying,* refer to the utterance and the meaning [i.e., after the manner of a single word that simultaneously bears more than one meaning]. This final view was the one held by later followers of Ibn Kullāb. Moreover, in addition to the third and fourth views cited here, the followers of Ibn Kullāb proposed a third position (related on the authority of Abu al-Ḥassan [al-Ashʿarī]), according

to which such terms are figurative when used to refer to Allah's words, and literal when used to refer to human words. This is because the words uttered by human beings inhere in them in such a way that speech may not exist apart from the speaker, whereas this is not the case with regard to the words of the Qur'ān, which do not inhere to Allah as to be considered His speech. (This matter is discussed elsewhere.)

What is meant here is that those among the pious ancestors who said that belief consists of both a saying and a work were referring to the saying of both the heart and the tongue, and to the work of both the heart and body parts. As for those who meant [mere] al-iʿtiqād, *submission,* they held that the term qawl, *saying,* should be understood to mean nothing but what one utters outwardly, although some by contrast, include belief in the heart. And if they said: "Iman is a saying, a work, and an intent," then the saying implies both belief and expression with the tongue, while a work may not imply an intent; therefore, they added "intent" to their interpretation. Moreover, their addition of the phrase "following the Sunnah" to their interpretation of Iman is attributed to the fact that a saying, a work, and an intent are not pleasing to Allah unless they follow the Sunnah. In fact, the intent behind all this is to refute the Mujuri'ites, who restricted Iman to a saying only. Those who define Iman as four parts: a saying, a work, an intent, and a following of the Sunnah, interpret it in the way Sahl Ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Tustarī[3] did when he was asked about it. He said: "Iman is a saying, a work, an intent, and a Sunnah." For if Iman is a saying without works, it will be considered unbelief; if it is a saying and a work but without an intent, it will be considered hypocrisy; and if it is a saying, a work, and an intent but without Sunnah, it will be considered innovation.

[3] Al-Tustarī, Abū Muḥammad Sahl Ibn ʿAbd Allah Ibn Yūnus (?–896 A.D.), was a Ṣūfī who used allegorical interpretations of the Qur'ān and was famous for his austerity. [Al-Fihrist, vol. 2, 1088.]

Chapter Thirteen

Association of Words and Phrases

The association of one word or phrase with another by means of a conjunction such as the word "and," whether in the Qur'ān or any other form of speech, requires that there be some sort of dissimilarity or contrast between the first term mentioned and the one conjoined to it, while at the same time the two terms must share jointly in the meaning attributed to a larger statement of which they are a part. There are varying levels of dissimilarity that may exist between two such terms, the highest being that they are entirely dissimilar such that neither of the two is synonymous with the other, neither of them makes up any part of the other, nor does either of them bear a logically necessary connection to the other. An example of this situation may be seen in the following verses. Allah says: "He Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days . . ." (25:59); and ". . . Gabriel and Michael . . ." (2:98); and ". . . And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel, before this, as a guidance to mankind, and He sent down the Criterion . . ." (3:3–4). This is the most common type of occurrence. The next level of contrast is seen when there is a type of luzūm, *necessary link,* between the two terms, as in the command, Allah says: "And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth . . ." (2:42); and "And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger [Muḥammad] after the right path had been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believer's way . . ." (4:115); and ". . . And whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers . . ." (4:136). For whoever has disbelieved in Allah has likewise disbelieved in all these other things as well (i.e., Allah's Angels, His Books, and His Messengers). Hence, the second term bears an essential link to the term with which it is conjoined. In the verse preceding this, the first term necessarily includes the second term associated with it; that is, whoever sets himself against the Messenger, even after the path of right

guidance has been made clear to him, has thereby followed a path other than that of the believers. However, concerning this second type of linkage there is some disagreement. Allah says: "And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth . . ." (2:42). In this verse, the first and second phrases are necessarily linked; for whoever confuses the truth with falsehood has thereby rendered the truth obscure such that falsehood becomes manifest while truth is hidden. Moreover, whoever conceals the truth must put falsehood in its place; and in this sense he confuses, or "clothes" truth with falsehood, as it were. For this reason, any of the People of the Book (i.e., Jews or Christians) who conceal what Allah reveals must by necessity bring falsehood to the fore.

Similarly, in the case of heretical sects, you will not find anyone who has abandoned some aspect of the teachings of the Sunnah that must be believed in and acted on but that he has fallen into some sort of heresy. And conversely, you will not find anyone professing a heretical belief but that he has rejected some part of the Sunnah. As is stated in the tradition related by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal: "No community has devised a heretical teaching but that they have rejected some corresponding aspect of the Sunnah." Allah says: " . . . But they forget a good part of the Message that was sent to them. So we planted among them enmity and hatred . . ." (5:14). When they forgot part of that which they had been reminded of, they replaced it with something else, with the result that enmity and hatred sprang up among them. Allah also says: "And whosoever turns away from the remembrance of the Beneficent, We appoint for him a Satan to be a close companion to him" (43:36). The dhikr, *remembrance,* mentioned here refers to the message that had been sent down by the Most Beneficent One. Allah says: ". . . Then whoever follows My guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into misery. But whosoever turns away from My Reminder, indeed for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection" (20:123–24); and "Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord, and follow not any protectors beside Him. Little do you remember" (7:3). Hence, Allah commands that we follow what He sends down and forbids us to do whatever is contrary to this, one aspect of which is following awliyāʾ, *protectors,* other than Him. For whoever does not follow one of the two must necessarily be following the other. For this reason Allah says: ". . . And follows other than the believers' way . . ." (4:115). According to Islamic scholars, whoever is not following the path of the believers must necessarily be following some other path; from this they concluded

that following the path of the believers is a duty. Moreover, no one is permitted to depart from those tenets on which such Islamic authorities have unanimously agreed.

Similarly it may be said that whoever has not done what is commanded has thereby done some of what is forbidden, just as whoever has done what is forbidden has not done all that is commanded. For it is not possible for someone to do all of what has been commanded while also doing some of what is forbidden, nor is it possible for someone to abandon all of what has been forbidden while also neglecting some of what has been commanded. For abandoning that which is forbidden is part of what has been commanded, and is thus itself commanded; and part of what is forbidden is the neglect of what has been commanded. Hence also, everything that distracts someone from doing his duty is forbidden, and everything without which one cannot undertake one's duties must therefore be done. It is for this reason that the term "command," when used in an absolute manner, includes prohibition, and if it is used in a conditional sense with prohibition, then this prohibition is similar to what has been mentioned above. Thus, Allah says, concerning the angels: ". . . Those who did not disobey Allah of what He commands them to do . . ." (66:6), this includes the notion that if He forbids them to do something, they will avoid it. And as for the what He [Allah] says: ". . . They do what they are commanded" (66:6), it has been interpreted to mean that they do not go beyond what they have been commanded to do. Another interpretation of this statement is that they do what they are commanded at the proper time; that is, they do it neither earlier nor later than they are commanded to do so.

It might be said that Allah did not say that they do nothing but what they are commanded. Allah says: "They speak not until He has spoken, and they act on His command" (21:27). It has been said that this means that they do not disobey the commands He has given them in the past, and they do what they have been commanded to do in the future. It might [also] be said that this verse is a statement of fact concerning what will be in the future. What they have been commanded to do here does not apply to the past; rather, it all pertains to the future. Allah says: ". . . Protect yourselves and your families from the Fire . . ." (66:6), where that with which they protect themselves applies to the future. It might also be said that one may neglect what He has been commanded to do either as a result of disobeying a command, or due to an inability to perform it. Hence, if one is both able and willing, then there must exist that which is both commanded and

practicable. For the clause "they do not disobey" means that they do not refrain from obeying; and Allah's saying: "... They do what they are commanded" (66:6) means that they are capable of doing what is commanded, and are not unable to do any of it; in fact, they perform all of it without exception, which necessitates the existence of everything they have been commanded [to do]. Implied in this may be the understanding that they do nothing but that which is commanded. One might say, for example, "I do what I was commanded," that is, "I do it without going beyond it either by way of addition or omission."

Allah says: ". . . Those who did not disobey Allah in what He commanded them to do . . ." (66:6), if Allah forbids them to perform some action, then this prohibition would be part of His command. Moreover, if He does not forbid them to do such a thing, they would not be considered blameworthy for doing what they had not been forbidden to do.

The point being made here is that the term al-amr, *command,* if used in an absolute sense, implies some prohibition. This may be seen in the following command. Allah says: "... Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority ... (4:59). Those referred to here as ūliy al-amr, *people of authority,* are those with the authority to issue commands, and anyone with the authority to issue commands likewise has the authority to issue prohibitions, and must be obeyed in his prohibitions no less than in his commands. Moses said to al-Khiḍr, Allah says: "He [Moses] said, if Allah wills, you will find me patient, and I will not disobey your command. He [al-Khiḍr] said, then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything until I, myself, mention it to you" (18:69–70). He [Moses] is forbidden to ask al-Khiḍr any questions until he mentions it to him. However, when al-Khiḍr pierces the ship, Moses says to him, Allah says: ". . . Have you scuttled it [the ship] in order to drown its people? Indeed, you have done a dreadful thing" (18:71), thus asking him a question before al-Khiḍr mentions it to him. This is the case also when al-Khidr kills the young man and Moses says, Allah says: ". . . Have you killed an innocent person who had killed none? Indeed, you have done a prohibited thing" (18:74). When al-Khiḍr builds the wall, Moses says to him, Allah says: ". . . If you had wished, surely, you could have taken wages for it" (18:77). This statement of Moses bears the sense of a question, since both questions and requests may be stated in the form of a conditional statement. One might say, for example, "if you stayed with us, you would honor us" or "if you spent the night with us, you would be doing us a favor." This form of expression

may be seen in Adam and Eve's words, Allah says: ". . . Our Lord! we have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not, and if you do not bestow Your Mercy on us, we shall certainly be the losers" (7:23); and in Noah's statement: ". . . Oh my Lord! I seek refuge with You from asking You that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have Mercy on me, I would indeed be one of the losers" (11:47), and numerous other examples. Moses said to al-Khiḏr, Allah says: ". . . If I ask you anything after this, keep me not in your company . . ." (18:76), thus indicating that he has asked him the three questions before thereby disobeying the prohibition which was implied in his assertion: Allah says: ". . . And I will not disobey your command" (18:69). And as we have seen, whoever disobeys a prohibition has also disobeyed a command. This may also be seen in the following. Allah says: ". . . Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment . . ." (7:54), where the giving of prohibitions is implied in the giving of commands. The same may be inferred from the following verses. Allah says: ". . . And let those who oppose his [Muḥammad's] commandment beware . . ." (24:63) and "It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision . . ." (33:36).

Islamic jurists have been in disagreement over the most correct interpretation of a man's statement to his wife: "if you disobey my command, you shall be divorced." The question being: if he forbids her to do something and she disobeys him, is this situation included in the conditional statement above? Two different answers have been proposed to this question. Some have held that the situation described here is not covered by the man's statement on the grounds that a command is one thing, and a prohibition is another. Others, however, have insisted that it is indeed covered by it, since it is customarily understood from a command that it implies some prohibitions. [I hold that] the latter view is the correct one; for the customary understanding referred to here is consistent with both linguistic usage and Islamic law. For if it is said: "obey so-and-so's command," or "so-and-so obeyed so-and-so's command," or "he does not disobey his command," these all encompass prohibitions. After all, the one who forbids is commanding that one abandon that which is forbidden. Thus, Allah says: "And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know it" (2:42). He did not say: "do not conceal the truth." There was no need for two prohibitions to be stated, since each prohibition was necessarily implied by the other. The "and" in the verse quoted is not a wāw al-jamʿ, *conjunction of addition,* referred to by Kūfan linguists as a

wāw al-ṣarf, *morphological conjunction,* as some might assume it to be. For if it were, then the meaning of the verse would have been: "do not combine these two activities [that is, confusing the truth with falsehood and concealing the truth]," the implication of which would be that engaging in either of them by itself would not be forbidden.

Moreover, this only comes into play if the distinction becomes apparent. Allah says: ". . . Before Allah tests those of you who fought and tests those who remained patient" (3:142); and "Or He may destroy them because of that which their [people] have earned. And He pardons much. And those who dispute with regard to Our Signs may know that there is no place of refuge for them" (42:34–35). An example of the conjunction of two terms where one of the two is necessarily implied in the other is an ʿaṭf al-malzūm, *binding conjunction.* Allah says: ". . . Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority . . ." (4:59), for if they obey the Prophet, they have obeyed Allah. Allah also says: "He who obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah . . ." (4:80), and if whoever has received Muḥammad's message has obeyed Allah, then he must necessarily have obeyed the Messenger. For there is no obedience to Allah apart from obedience to His Messenger. As for the third level of distinction, it is the conjunction of two terms in which one of the two forms part of the other. Allah says: "Guard your prayers, especially the middle prayer . . ." (2:238); and "And when We took from the Prophets their Covenant, and from you [Oh, Muḥammad] and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, son of Mary . . ." (33:7); and "Whoever is an enemy to Allah, His Angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael . . ." (2:98); and "And He caused you to inherit their lands, and their houses and their properties, and a land which you had not trodden [before] . . ." (33:27). And lastly we have the fourth level of distinction, which involves the conjunction of different terms in order to bring out a distinction among two or more qualities in a single entity. Allah says: "Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High; Who has created, then proportioned it; And Who has measured, then guided; And Who brings out the [green and luscious] pasture" (87:1–4) and "Those who believe in the unseen and offer their prayers, and spend out of what We have provided for them; And those who believe in that which has been revealed to you [Oh, Muḥammad] and in that which has been revealed before you [i.e., the Torah and the Gospel] and they believe in the Hereafter" (2:3–4). There are examples in poetry of conjunctions between terms that are said by some to be for the purpose

of highlighting a distinction in pronunciation only [as opposed to a distinction in meaning]. For example, we have a verse of poetry that reads: wa alfā qawlahā kadhiban wa mīnā, *And he found what she said to be a falsehood and a lie.*

There are some who claim that this sort of thing is also found in the Book of Allah. For example, Allah says: ". . . [We have prescribed] a law and a clear way . . ." (5:48). However, they are mistaken, for this type of conjunction never occurs in the Qur'ān, nor, for that matter, in any type of eloquent speech. Rather, the purpose behind instances of this type of conjunction is to bring out a distinction in meaning between the conjoined terms. As an example of a conjunction for the purpose of highlighting a mere distinction in pronunciation, some have cited the following verse of poetry:

lā ḥabbadhā hindun wa 'arḍun bihā hindu
wa hindun 'atā min dunihā al-na'yu wal-bu'du
Ah, how lovely is Hind, and how beautiful is any land in which she is to be found,
yet remoteness and distance have come without her.

They have claimed that the two words al-na'yu and al-bu'du, translated as *remoteness,* and *distance,* have the same meaning. And in support of their view they have cited the Qur'ānic phrase quoted above, namely, shir'atan wa minhājan, saying that these two words, which convey the senses of "law" and "way," "road," "method," or "program," respectively, mean basically the same thing. However, those who disagree with this view have objected, saying that al-na'yu, *remoteness,* has a broader, more inclusive meaning than al-bu'du, *distance.* The first term encompasses the notions of contrast, dissimilarity, parting, leave taking, and departure, and may or may not involve geographical distance; the latter term, on the other hand, is used only to speak of those entities separated by a great geographical distance. Allah says: "And they prevent others from him [from following Muḥammad] and they themselves keep away from him . . ." (6:26); those people referred to are considered blameworthy for avoiding and distancing themselves from Him whether they happen to be near or far away. And in fact, not all of them were far away from him, especially one who says: "I stayed with Abu Ṭālib." As the poet al-Nābighah said: "The trench around the al-nu'ī, *tent,* is like a basin." The word nu'wīyun, used to refer to the trench one digs around a tent so as to catch water that otherwise would have gone inside the tent, is derived from the same root as the verb na'ā, meaning *to be* or *become remote.* Moreover, this trench is said to be like a basin that flanks the tent yet without being far away from it.

Chapter Fourteen

Connotations of Absolute Iman

What has been stated previously indicates that the word Iman, if applied in an absolute sense in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, implies birr, *piety,* taqwā, *righteousness,* and dīn, *religion.* For example, the Prophet (pbuh) stated that: "Iman has over seventy branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious from the road." Hence, Iman implies all of what Allah loves. So too do the words "righteousness" and "religion," if applied in an absolute sense. It has been reported that some people asked about Iman, and Allah reveals the following verse: "It is not of piety that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is piety to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Prophets . . ." (2:177). Thus piety was interpreted through Iman, as was righteousness also. The Prophet (pbuh) interpreted "piety" both as Iman and as the work that takes one nearer to Allah; and these interpretations are true.

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr [al-Marwazī] said that it was related to us by Isḥāq Ibn Ibrāhīm,[1] ʿAbd Allah Ibn Yazīd al Muqri',[2] and al-Mullā'ī[3] that al-Masʿūdī[4]

[1] Isḥāq Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Rāhawīyah (?–853 A.D.) was a compiler of ḥadith and a mathematician. Both al-Bukharī and Muslim studied ḥadith with him. [Al-Fihrist, vol. 2, p. 1082 and al-Zirkilī, vol. 1, p. 284.]

[2] Al-Muqri', ʿAbd Allah Ibn Yazīd (?–213 A.H.), was a scholar of ḥadith and a teacher of Qur'ān. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 170.]

[3] Al-Mullā'ī, ʿAbd al-Salām Ibn Ḥarb (?–187 A.H.), was a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 170.]

[4] Al-Masʿūdī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (?–160 A.H.), was a compiler of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 170.]

related on the authority of al-Qāsim,[5] who said: "One day a man came to Abu Dharr and asked him about [the meaning of] Iman, *belief.* In response he recited the following verse : "It is not of piety that you turn your faces . . ." (2:177), to the end of the verse. The man replied: "I did not ask you about birr, *piety.*" Abu Dharr said that once a man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked him about the same matter that you have just asked me about. In response, the Prophet recited to him the same verse I recited to you, and the man said the same thing to the Prophet that you have said to me. When the man refused to be satisfied, the Prophet said to him: "Indeed, the believer is the one who, if he does good, is pleased and hopes for a reward, and if he does evil, is displeased and fears punishment."

He [Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr] also said that it was related to us by Isḥāq, ʿAbd al-Razzāq, and Muʿammar,[6] on the authority of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jazarī,[7] on the authority of Mujāhid, that Abu Dharr once asked the Prophet (pbuh) about belief, so he recited to him the verse that says: "It is not of piety that you turn your faces . . ." (2:177), to the end of the verse. This same tradition has been related on the authority of ʿIkrimah, who said that al-Ḥassan Ibn ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib,[8] after coming from Syria was asked about the meaning of belief. In response he recited: "It is not of piety that you turn your faces towards the east or the west . . ." (2:177). It was related by Ibn Baṭṭah,[9] based on the same chain of authority ending with Mubārak Ibn Ḥassān,[10] who said that I once said to Sālim al-Afṭas[11] that there was once a man who was obedient to Allah, who had never disobeyed Him, and another who had only disobeyed Allah and never obeyed Him. The obedient man died, and Allah admitted him into Paradise. The disobedient man also died, and Allah sent him to Hell. So is the belief of either of these two men better than the

[5] Al-Qāsim, Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Abdullāh ibn Masʿūd (?–116 A.H.), was a jurist and a judge in Kūfah. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 171.]

[6] Al-Azdī, Muʿammar Ibn Rāshid (?–153 A.H.), was a jurist and a scholar of ḥadith. [Al-Zirkilī, vol. 8, p. 190 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 171.]

[7] Al-Jazarī, ʿAbd al-Karīm Ibn Mālik (?–127 A.H.), was a compiler of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 171.]

[8] Al-Ḥassan Ibn ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib Abu Muḥammad (?–50 A.H.) was the grandson of Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh). [*EI* 2, vol. 3, p. 240 and al-Zirkilī, vol. 2, p. 214.]

[9] Ibn Baṭṭah, ʿUbayd Allah Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Abdullāh al-ʿUkbarī (?–387 A.H.), was a well-known Ḥanbalī scholar and jurist consult. He wrote several books, the most well-known among them are *al-Ibānah* and *al-Sunan.* [*EI* 2, vol. 3, page 734 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, pp. 171–72.]

[10] Mubārak Ibn Ḥassān al-Sullamī (n.d.) was a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 173.]

[11] Al-Afṭas, Sālim (n.d.) was a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 172.]

others? No, he replied. I mentioned this to ʿAṭāʾ who said to ask them whether belief is ṭayyib, *good,* or khabīth, *wicked.* For Allah says: "In order that Allah may distinguish the wicked from the good and put the wicked one on another, keep them together and cast them into Hell. Those are the losers" (8:37). So I asked them, but they gave me no reply, though some of them said that belief is inward, and has nothing to do with works. So I mentioned this also to ʿAṭāʾ, and he said: "Praise be to Allah! Have they not read the verse in Sūrat al-Baqarah that says: 'It is not of piety that you turn your faces towards the east or the west; but piety is the one who believes in Allah and the Last Day, the Angels, the Book and the Prophets . . .'" (2:177). Then he said that Allah also describes the works that are required for belief. Allah says: ". . . And gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans and to the poor who beg and to the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, and offers the prayers, and gives the zakah, and who fulfills their covenant when they make it, and who are patient in extreme poverty and ailment and at the time of fighting. Such are the people of the truth and they are the righteous ones" (2:177). Then he [ʿAṭāʾ] said: "Ask them whether this type of good work is implied by this name." Allah says: "And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it, with the necessary effort due for it while he is a believer . . ." (17:19), thus linking the name [belief] with work, and work with the name [belief.]

It follows from what has been said that praise is not merited by Iman without works but only by Iman accompanied by works. Thus, if it is known that dispraise and punishment are due to abandoning good works, their [the Murjiʾites'] controversy became nothing but an outward dispute. On the other hand, if they [the Murjiʾites] said that abandoning good works is not harmful, this saying is outright unbelief. Some people related that the Murjiʾites said that Allah makes some matters obligatory. Nevertheless, He does not ask them to do these things nor does He say that abandoning these acts will harm them. This token may refer to extremists who say that none of the people who believe in the oneness of Allah enters Hell. This is the view of immoral hypocrites who claim that as long as one believes in the oneness of Allah, no sin can harm him. I [the author] state that I have never known a specific person who related this statement. However, people discuss it in books without stating specifically who says it. This would be the statement of those who have no moral character from among the sinners and the hypocrites who said that it is not harmful to have sin with Iman or with tawḥīd,

oneness of Allah, at the same time. Some of those who advanced the argument against the Murji'ites ascribed this statement to them. The following verse is a testimony to this: ". . . Such are the people of truth, and they are the righteous ones" (2:177). That is, they are the people of truth in their saying that they believe. Allah also says: "The desert Arabs say, 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith; but you [only] say.' 'We have submitted our wills to Allah for not yet has faith entered your hearts . . .'" (49:14). He also says: "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their lives in the Cause of Allah: Such are the sincere ones" (49:15). That is, they are the sincere ones in their saying that they believe in Allah, in contrast to the liars, of whom Allah says: "When the hypocrites come to you, they say, 'We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah.' Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are indeed liars." (63:1). Allah also says: "And among some people who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day' while, in fact, they believe not. They think they can deceive Allah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive it not. In their heart is a disease and Allah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies"(2:8–10). There are two well-known versions for the reading of the words yukadhdhibūn, and yukdhibūn, both of which mean *telling lies*. This means that they lied when they said, "we believe in Allah and the Last Day." They also, inwardly, did not believe the Messenger even though outwardly they showed that they believed him. Allah says: "Alif. Lām. Mīm. Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: 'we believe' and will not be tested? And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allah will certainly make known [the truth of] those who are true and will certainly make known [the falsehood of] those who are liars" (29:1–3). In these verses, Allah indicates that one's Iman must be tested and tried. The word yaftun, which is used in the sense *to test,* also is used in the expression fatantu al-dhahab, *tested the gold.* This expression describes when the goldsmith wants to test or purify gold that may have been mixed with foreign substances . Moses said, Allah says: ". . . It is only Your trial by which You lead Whom you will stray and keep guided, Whom you will lead into the right path. . ." (7:155). What is meant by this verse is to test the trial and tribulation of the people with the good and the bad in order to find out those who are patient and thankful and those who are not. Also the trial and tribulation is being tested through sending down Messengers and Books in order to distinguish

between a believer and an unbeliever, thus causing some people to stray and others to be rightly guided.

The Qur'ān is full of examples that describe the believers as the People of Truth and the hypocrites as liars, despite the fact that both groups profess Iman [with their lips]. To put it differently, those whose deeds validate what they profess with their lips are considered sincere believers, while those who profess with their lips what is not in their hearts are considered as liars. Allah says: "What you suffered on the day the two armies met, was with the leave of Allah, in order that He might test the believers. And that He might test the hypocrites also, these were told: 'Come, fight in the way of Allah, or [at least] drive [the foe from your city].' They said: 'Had we known there would be a fight, we should certainly have followed you.' They were that day nearer to unbelief than to belief, saying with their lips what was not in their hearts. But Allah has full knowledge of all they conceal" (3:166–67). For when Allah declared in the verse of al-birr, *piety:* ". . . Those are the people of the truth and they are the righteous ones" (2:177), He indicated that the meaning intended is that they spoke the truth when they said: "We believe," since this is the utterance they had been commanded to make and that they in fact did make. They had not been commanded [merely] to utter with their tongues: "we are righteous." Rather, if a man says, "I am righteous," he is vouching for his own integrity. For this reason, Zaynab, the daughter of Jahsh, was named Birrah, that is, *Pious One*. It has been said that because she bore witness to her own integrity, the Prophet (pbuh) called her Zaynab. This is in contrast to the establishment of belief by their saying: "We have believed," for making this declaration was imposed upon them. Allah says: "Say [Oh, Muslims]: 'We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and to al-Asbāṭ [the twelve sons of Jacob], and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord . . .'"(2:136). Also in the chapter entitled Āl ʿUmrān, Allah says: "Say [Oh, Muḥammad]: 'We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us, and that which has been sent to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and to al-Asbāṭ [the twelve sons of Jacob], and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord . . .'"(3:84). Allah also says: "The Messenger [Muḥammad] believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one of them believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. They say: 'We

make no distinction between one and the other of His Messengers . . .'" (2:285). In this verse Allah is saying that we do not make any distinction among them as a further indication to their saying: "We believe and we do not make any distinction." For this reason He [Allah] says: ". . . And they said we heard and obey . . ." (2:285). Thus, they combined their two statements: "We believed and we heard and obeyed." Allah says in the verse of al-birr, *piety:* ". . . Those are the righteous ones" (2:177). Thus He [Allah] made al-Abrār, *the Pious Ones* as the al-Mutaqūn, *the Righteous Ones,* and when used in an absolute sense and in isolation from each other, they are considered synonymous. However, when specific and used in association with each other, their meanings are distinguished, as in the verse that reads: ". . . Help one another in piety and righteousness . . ." (5:2). This last verse indicates that when used in an absolute manner, the words Iman, *belief;* birr, *piety;* and taqwā, *righteousness,* all refer to the same reality; hence, the believers are the righteous ones, who in turn are also the pious ones.

For this reason some of the Prophet's (pbuh) sayings about intercession state that Allah takes out of the Fire whoever has an atom's weight of Iman; others mention "an atom's weight of good." This is compatible with Allah's saying: "Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it" (99:7–8). An atom's weight of good is also an atom's weight of Iman. Those pious, righteous believers enjoyed absolute happiness. They were also the People of Paradise, who were promised that they would enter Paradise without punishment. However, one about whom the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Who cheats us is not one of us and whoever takes up arms against us is not one of us," he is not considered among the believers but rather one of the sinners who are subject to punishment.

Chapter Fifteen

Attributes and Terms With Specific Connotations

This type is after the pattern of the names used to describe the names of Allah, His Books, His Messengers and His religion. Allah says: "Say [Oh, Muḥammad]: Call upon Allah, or call upon al-Raḥman, *the Most Beneficent:* By whatever name you call upon Him, [it is the same]: for to Him belongs the Most Beautiful Names" (17:110). He also says: "And [all] the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call Him by them and leave the company of those who deny His names . . ." (7:180); and "He is Allah, than Whom there is no other god, the Knower of the unseen and visible. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah, than Whom there is no other god except Him, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace and Perfection, the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! [High is He] above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms [or Colors]. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All Almighty, the All Wise" (59:22–24). All of Allah's attributes are consistent with one another in that they all describe His holy essence. At the same time, each name denotes a particular divine attribute that is distinct from that which is denoted by any other name. Hence, the name al-ʿAzīz, *the Almighty,* denotes the divine essence in its capacity as all-powerful; the name al-Khāliq, *the Creator,* denotes the divine essence as associated with the act of creating; while the name al-Raḥīm, *the Merciful,* conveys the notion of the divine Self as demonstrating mercy. The divine Self requires all these attributes, such that each name denotes this Essence, as well as the attribute to which it specifically refers, through direct correspondence; it signifies either one or the other of these two by implication, and connotes other attributes by necessity.

The same applies to the names used to describe Allah's Book: al-Qur'ān, *the Recitation;* al-Furqān, *the Criterion;* al-Kitab, *the Book;* al-Hudā, *the Guidance;* al-Bayān, *the Clear Declaration;* al-Shifā', *the Healing Balm;* al-Nūr, *the Light;* and so forth. These are the revealed names. The following names are used to describe Allah's Messenger: Muḥammad; Aḥmad; al-Māḥī, *the Abrogator;* al-Ḥāshir, *the Assembler;* al-Muqaffī, *the Rhymer;* and Nabī al-Malḥamah, *the Prophet of Mercy, the Prophet of Repentance,* and *the Epic Prophet.* Each name denotes one of his praiseworthy qualities, each of which is distinct from those denoted by any of the other names. Such is also the case with stories that occur more than once in the Qur'ān, such as the story of Moses and others. They are not repeated merely for the purpose of providing material for evening conversation, but rather to teach moral lessons. Allah says: "Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding . . ." (12:111). For the events that took place are the same, yet they may be described in various ways; hence, the same story is conveyed through a variety of expressions, each of which communicates a different aspect of the events from which the hearer may draw a lesson. Therefore, what we have here is in fact not really repetition at all.

The same applies to the names of Allah's religion. Allah commands His Messenger that these names be: Iman, *Belief;* Birr, *Piety;* Taqwā, *Righteousness;* Khayr, *Goodness;* Dīn, *Religion;* ʿAmal Ṣāliḥ, *Good Work;* Ṣirāṭ Mustaqīm, *Straight Path;* and so forth. All these names refer to one and the same thing [i.e., religion]. But each indicates a distinct and unique attribute that is not indicated by the other attributes. This attribute will be the basic name for the attribute and the rest will be associate terms, but with the basic term and always connected with it. They come to denote the same thing simply by association. For example, the word Iman refers to belief that is in the heart, which, by necessity, must have two aspects: belief in the heart, and its confession and knowledge. This is referred to as the saying of the heart. Al-Junayd Ibn Muḥammad[1] said: tawḥīd, *Oneness of Allah,* is a saying of the heart; and tawakkul, *trust in Allah,* is the work of the heart, which first requires the saying and the work of the heart, then, the saying and the work of the body. The work of the heart is essential in this regard. Illustrations include love of Allah and His Messenger, fear of Allah, love for what

[1] Al-Junayd, Abu al-Qāsim Ibn Muḥammad (?–298 A.H.), was a celebrated Ṣūfī theologian, a jurist, and a native of Baghdād. He studied under Abu Thawr and was associated with Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī. [*EI* vol. 2, p. 600 and *al-Firhist,* vol. 2, p. 1025.]

Allah and His Messenger love, hatred for what Allah and His Messenger hate, working with devotion for none but Allah, putting trust in none but Allah, and other works of the heart that are required by Allah and His Messenger and that constitute part of Iman.

The heart is the essential part; if it has knowledge and will, all the body will necessarily be influenced. The body cannot function apart from what the heart desires. To clarify, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "There is a [muḍghah *small piece*] in the body. If it is pure, the whole body is as well, and if it is spoiled, the whole body is also; namely, it is the heart."

Abu Hurayrah said: "The heart is a king and the other members of the body are its soldiers. Hence, if the heart is good, so also will its soldiers be; and if the heart is full of evil and malice, its soldiers will be likewise." The metaphor provided by Abu Hurayrah is an approximation; however, the description given by the Prophet (pbuh) illustrates the same truth more clearly. He said: "If (the heart) is pure, so will the entire body be; and if [the heart] is corrupt, the entire body will be corrupt as well." As for Abu Hurayrah's metaphor, its weakness lies in the fact that if the king is righteous, then the soldiers still have a choice as to whether they will obey their king or not. The soldiers might be righteous even though the king is corrupt, or corrupt while the king is righteous. This situation contrasts with the relationship between the heart and the body; for the body is completely subject to the heart, and may never violate its will.

Thus, if the heart is pure, by its knowledge and works of Iman, then the body is pure by the outward sayings and works of Iman. As the compilers of ḥadith say concerning Iman: "Saying and work: saying is both inward and outward, and so is work. The outward follows from the inward and is a necessary constituent of it." Thus, if the inward is pure, the outward is so also; and if the inward is spoiled, so is the outward. For this reason one of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) said about the man who gestured while praying: "If he had a humble heart, the parts of his body would be humble too." The belief of the heart requires one to love Allah and His Messenger and hold Allah and His Messenger dearer than anything else. Allah says: "And of some people are those who take others besides Allah as rivals [to Allah]. But those who believe love Allah more . . ." (2:165). In this statement He describes those who have believed as having greater love for Allah than do the polytheists for their andād, *partners*.

There are two interpretations of this verse. According to the first, the polytheists love their idols as believers love Allah, but the love that believers have for Allah is greater than the love that polytheists have for their idols. According to the second view, the polytheists love their idols as much as they love Allah, but the believers love Allah more than the polytheists do. It is the second view that is held to be the correct one. As for the first interpretation, it is both groundless and contradictory. For polytheists do not love their idols as believers love Allah. Such love requires the will, and a perfect will together with the ability to act leads necessarily to performance of the act itself. Thus it would be impossible for someone to love Allah and His Messenger, to desire that which Allah and His messenger desire with a definitive, unwavering will, and to be able to carry this out, without actually doing so. Hence, if someone does not voice his belief, although he is able to do so, this indicates that he does not have in his heart that belief which Allah requires of him.

The Invalidity of the Idea That Iman Is Mere Assent and Knowledge of the Heart

The author refutes the claim of Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān and his followers, who believed that Iman is mere taṣdīq, *assent,* in the heart and knowledge in the heart, so they did not include the works of the heart as part of Iman. Moreover, they believed that one may have true Iman in his heart even if he puts a curse on Allah and His Messenger, becomes an enemy of the followers of Allah, and becomes a supporter and friend to Allah's enemies; killing the prophets, razing mosques, handling copies of the Qur'ān irreverently, and showing the utmost honor to unbelievers while treating believers with contempt. Jahm and his followers claimed that all such behaviors were merely acts of disobedience that did not nullify the belief in one's heart. Rather, even though one does all these things, he remains a believer inwardly in the sight of Allah. However, they acknowledged that in worldly terms such a person would indeed be judged an unbeliever. This is because although by his words he may be judged outwardly to be an unbeliever, he may be inwardly other than what he professes. Furthermore, they believed that if the Book, the Sunnah, and the Consensus of Opinion say that he is an unbeliever and will be punished in the Hereafter, then this indicates that he has no knowledge and belief in his heart. Hence, unbelief, according to them, is one thing: namely, ignorance;

and Iman is also one thing: namely, knowledge or belief and disbelief of the heart. For they were in disagreement as to whether the taṣdīq, *assent,* of the heart is the same as knowledge or something else.

This view [i.e., the view that belief is the same thing as knowledge] has been held by many scholastic theologians and followers of the Murjiʾite sect, though it is the most corrupt interpretation of belief that has ever been adopted. Some of the pious ancestors, such as Wakīʿ Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Abu ʿUbayd, and others, declared anyone who held this view to be an unbeliever. In support of their position, they noted the fact that Iblīs, *the devil,* is clearly an unbeliever according to what we read in the Qurʾān; however, he is not an unbeliever because of having disbelieved some particular report, but rather because he was so arrogant and proud that he refused to bow down to Adam. Similarly, Allah says of Pharaoh and his people: "And they denied them [those verses], though their souls acknowledged them, for spite and arrogance . . ." (27:14). Speaking to Pharaoh, Moses said: "Indeed, you know that these signs have been sent down by none but the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth as clear [proofs] . . ." (17:102). The larger context of Moses' statement is as follows: "And indeed We gave to Moses nine clear signs. Ask then the Children of Israel, when he came to them, then Pharaoh said to him: 'Oh, Moses! I think you are indeed bewitched.' He [Moses] said: 'Indeed, you know that these signs have been sent down by none but the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth as clear [proofs]. And I think you are indeed, Oh, Pharaoh, doomed to destruction'"(17:101–2). Thus spoke Moses, who was both truthful and trustworthy. Allah says: "He [Moses] said: 'Indeed, you know that these signs have been sent down by none but the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth as clear [proofs] . . .'" (17:102), thus indicating that Pharaoh was aware of the fact that Allah had sent down these signs. Thus, Pharaoh was among Allah's most obstinate, oppressive creatures—not because of lack of knowledge on his part, but because of the corruption of his will. Allah says: "Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into sects, weakening a group among them, killing their sons, and letting their females live. Indeed, he was one of the corrupt ones" (28:4); and "And they denied them [those verses], though their souls acknowledged them, for spite and arrogance . . ." (27:14). Similarly, Allah says of the Jews: "Those to whom We gave the Scripture [Jews and Christians] recognize him [Muḥammad] as they recognize their sons . . ." (2:146);

and of the polytheists Allah says: ". . . It is not you [Muḥammad] that they deny but it is the verses [of the Qur'ān] of Allah that they deny" (6:33).

THE TWO BASIC ERRORS OF THE MURJI'ITES

The first error of the Murji'ites: The Murji'ites thought that Iman, *belief,* was mere taṣdīq, *assent,* and ʿilm, *knowledge,* without work, state, action, will, love and humility in the heart. This is one of the gravest errors the Murji'ites ever committed. For the works of the heart, which some Ṣūfīs call states and ranks, are part of the obligations that Allah and His Messenger have laid down; therefore, they are part of the belief required of us. They also include what Allah makes desirable but not obligatory, and are therefore the part of Iman that is not required, but merits reward by Allah. The former is necessary for every believer and whoever is confined to it is among the righteous, while the latter is necessary for those who draw especially near to Allah, such as loving Allah and His Messenger, holding Allah and His Messenger dearer than anything else, cherishing Allah and His Messenger, struggling in the Cause of Allah more dearly than one's family and property, fearing Allah, expecting good from none but Allah, putting trust in none but Allah, and being completely devoted to Him. Allah says: "[A voice will say] This is what was promised for you, for everyone who turned [to Allah] in sincere repentance, who kept [His Law], who feared [Allah] Most Gracious Unseen, and brought a heart turned in devotion [to Him]" (50:32–33) and such similar things, like the love of Allah, the hate of Allah, the support of Allah, and the enmity toward Allah.

The second error of the Murji' ites was their belief that if al-S͟hāriʿ, *the Legislator* [the Prophet], judges someone to be an unbeliever who will abide forever in Hell, then the reason would be the lack of knowledge and taṣdīq, *assent,* in his heart. In this matter they [the Murji'ites] contradicted common sense, reason, and law and all that people considered right through their natural disposition. For one may know [in his heart] but deny that he is wrong and that others are right. In general, those who denied that Allah sent down the Messengers knew [in their hearts] that the Messengers were right and persons of the truth, but they disbelieved them either out of covetousness and a desire for preeminence or out of their love for the religion they followed and the attainments that their old religion afforded them, such as wealth, power, alliances with other tribes, and so on. For this reason they

saw following the Messenger as forcing them to abandon objects of affection and attachment or even to suffer harm, and it was this that caused them to disbelieve the prophets and set themselves against them. Hence, Iblīs, *the devil,* and Pharaoh were considered the most blasphemous of all people who really knew that they were wrong and that the Messengers were right. For this reason unbelievers never cited sound arguments to challenge the truthfulness of the Messengers but depended on their contradictory wills and desires. An example is their saying to Noah. Allah says: ". . . They said: 'Shall we believe in you when it is the meanest [of the people] that follow you?'" (26:111). It is known that the following of the meanest did not cast doubt on the truthfulness of Noah. Rather, they disliked the notion of having to associate with such people [i.e., those referred to in the verse as al-ardhalūna, *the meanest of the people]*. Similarly, the polytheists asked the Prophet (pbuh) to cast out the weak, such as Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Ibn Masʿūd, Khubāb Ibn al-Irth, ʿAmmār Ibn Yāsir, Bilāl, and others [from his community]. This occurred in Makkah, before there were ahl ṣifah, *people of distinction,* so Allah reveals the verse that says: "And turn not away [Oh, Muḥammad] those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon seeking His Face. You are accountable to them for nothing, and they are accountable to you for nothing, that you may turn them away, and thus become one of the unjust ones. Thus, We have tried some of them with others, that they may say: 'Is it these [who are believers] that Allah has favored from among us? Does not Allah know best those who are grateful?'" (6:52–53).

In a similar vein, Pharaoh said: "They said: 'Shall we believe in two men like ourselves? And their people are subject to us!'" (23:47). And the statement of Pharaoh: "He [the Pharaoh] said to [Moses]: 'Did we not bring you up among us as a child? And you did dwell many years with us. And you did your deed, which you did, i.e., the crime of killing a man. And are you one of the unbelievers'" (26:18–19)? While the polytheists among the Arabs said that Allah says: "And they say: 'If we follow the guidance with you, we would be snatched away from our land . . ." (28:57). Allah also says: ". . . Have we not established for them a secure Sanctuary [Makkah], to which are brought fruits of all kinds . . ." (28:57); while the tribe of Shuʿayb said to him [the Prophet] that Allah says: "They said: 'Oh, Shuʿayb! Does your prayer command you that we abandon what our fathers used to worship, or that we abandon doing what we like with our property? . . .'"(11:87). And the saying of most of the polytheists, Allah says: ". . . We found

our fathers following a certain religion, and we do guide ourselves by their footsteps" (43:22).

These examples do not refute the veracity of the Messengers, but indicate that the evidence contradicts their [the Murji'ites'] will, desires, and habits; for this reason they did not follow the Messengers. Hence they are considered unbelievers. Indeed, Abu Ṭālib [the Prophet's uncle] and others who loved the Prophet (pbuh) loved to see him in a distinguished position, did not have any envy against him, and knew about his truthfulness. However, they could not bear to leave the religion of their forefathers or listen to the curses that the Quraysh tribe hurled at them. Hence, they did not abandon Iman for lack of knowledge but out of their own desire. Then, how can they say that every unbeliever rejects Iman for lack of knowledge of Allah!

The Jahmites considered every unbeliever to be ignorant of the truth, saying that he did not know it to be true that Allah exists. Disbelief, as they saw it, is not ignorance of just any truth, but rather ignorance of this particular truth. However, both we and everyone else know of unbelievers who are inwardly convinced that the religion of Islam is true, yet they mention other reasons for their not having belief. These reasons might include such things as the possibility of suffering hostility from their families; being cut off from wealth that would otherwise accrue to them from their families; the fear that were they to become believers, they would not be afforded the same protection by Muslims that they have been afforded by their former religion; and other such concerns or fears that they declared to be the reasons for their not becoming believers. Moreover, such factors determined their choices, even though at the same time they were certain that the religion of Islam is true while their own is false. Such things occur with respect to all questions of truth; there will be some who know in their hearts that a given thing is true, although outwardly they deny this. Such individuals may even display enmity toward those who profess this truth in the belief that this hostility on their part will benefit them in some manner and protect them from harm. Allah says: "Oh, you who believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to each other. If any among you takes them [for friends] then surely he is one of them. Indeed Allah guides not those people who are wrongdoers. Those in whose hearts is a disease, you see how eagerly they run about among them, saying: 'We do fear unless a change of fortune brings us disaster.' Ah! Perhaps Allah will give [you] victory, or a decision

according to His Will. Then will they repent of the thoughts which they secretly harbored in their hearts. And those who believe will say: 'Are these the men [hypocrites] who swore their strongest oaths by Allah, that they were with you [Muslims]?' All that they did has been in vain [because of their hypocrisy], and they have become the losers" (5:51–53).

Interpreters of the Qur'ān unanimously agree on the fact that these verses were revealed because of the hypocrites who pretended to be with the Muslims, but an affliction was in their hearts. If they feared in their hearts that Allah would not grant victory to the people of Islam, they would take unbelievers—whether Jews, Christians, or others—for friends and protectors. This happened not because they believed that the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) was a liar and the Jews and Christians possessed the truth, but simply because they feared that the Muslims would not be granted victory. Indeed, it was narrated that 'Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit said: "Oh, Prophet of Allah, I have taken some Jews for friends and protectors and I am acquitted to Allah for having Jews for friends and protectors." Upon this 'Abd Allah Ibn Ubay remarked: "But I am a man who fears a change of fortune that may bring me disaster, hence, I am not above seeking the friendship and protection of Jews." For this reason, the above-mentioned verses were revealed.

The Murji'ites' Opinion of Iman

Among the Murji'ites, who said that Iman is taṣdīq, *assent,* in the heart and an utterance of the tongue but does not include works, was a group of Kūfah jurists. Their claims were not like those of Jahm, for they recognized that one is not a believer if, although he is able to express his belief verbally, he does not do so. They also acknowledged that Iblīs, Pharaoh, and others were unbelievers despite the fact that they believed the truth in their hearts. However, if they did not include the works of the heart in their definition of belief, they would have been obliged to adopt the view of Jahm. If, on the other hand, they did include such 'works of the hearts' in their understanding of belief, then they would have needed to include the works of the parts of the body as well, since such outward works are necessarily associated with those of the heart. However, if they [the Murji'ites] had put forward arguments based on Islamic law, this matter would have been obscured even further. For they held that Allah makes a distinction in the Qur'ān

between belief and work; for He refers to this in more than one place: Allah says: "Truly those who believe, and do works of righteousness . . ." (2:277). Moreover, they held that in various places Allah addresses human beings as believers before they have performed works [that would display belief]. For example, Allah says: "Oh, you who believe! When you intend to offer prayers, wash your faces and your hands [forearms] up to the elbows . . ." (5:6); and "All you who believe [i.e., Muslims]! When the call is proclaimed for the prayer on Friday . . ." (62:9). They also said that if a man became a believer in Allah and His Messenger early in the day and suddenly dies that day before he is obliged to perform some of the obligations, he will die as a believer and will enter Paradise. Hence, works are not part of Iman. Moreover, they said that we profess that Iman increases. That is, every time Allah sends down a verse, it should be accepted. Thus, this acceptance will be combined with the acceptance that precedes it. However, after the completion of the revelation, no one's Iman will be greater than anyone else's. That is, all peoples' Iman becomes the same no matter what everyone's belief is, be it the belief of the earliest believers such as Abu Bakr (al-Ṣiddīq) and ʿUmar (Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb), or that of the most immoral of people, such as al-Ḥajjāj (Ibn Yūsuf), Abu Muslim al-Khurāsānī, and others.

The Murjiʾites, especially the theologians and jurists from among them, regarded works as part of Iman in a figurative way, for a work is the fruit and requirement of Iman. They defended this argument by referring to the Prophet's saying: "Iman has sixty or seventy branches, the highest of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the lowest of which is the removal of what is injurious from the path."

Murjiʾite Errors in Understanding Iman

The Murjiʾites were of three views: The first was that Iman is merely what is in the heart. Most of them believed that works of the heart contribute to Iman, as indicated in the book of Abu al-Ḥassan al-Ashʿarī. He also mentioned many other sects whose listing would be lengthy, although the author states that he has mentioned most of their statements. This view does not include works as part of Iman. This was the opinion of Jahm and of those who followed him, such as al-Ṣāliḥī, who, along with his followers, were great supporters of him [Jahm]. The second view states that Iman is a mere utterance of the tongue. This position was

not known prior to the opinions of the Karrāmite sect. The third view states that Iman is taṣdīq, *assent*, of the heart and a saying of the tongue. This was the most well-known position among them. Indeed, this was the prevailing belief among the jurists and the worshipers of the Murjiʾites. All three views are in error in several aspects:

The first is their [the Murjiʾites'] assumption that the Iman that Allah requires of us is equal for all Allah's servants, and that the belief incumbent upon one person is likewise required of another. This assumption is false, for the followers of the earlier Prophets were required by Allah to have a kind of belief that was not required of Muḥammad's community, just as the belief required of Muḥammad's community was not the same as that required of still others. And the type of Iman that was required prior to the revelation of all of the Qurʾān is different from the Iman required after the revelation. For the Iman required of someone who knew what the Messenger was told in detail would not be the same as that required of someone who knew what the Messenger was told in general. It is incumbent as part of Iman to believe in the Messenger in all that he brought forward. But in the case of someone who believes in the Messenger and dies immediately afterward, only that part of Iman is incumbent upon him. Moreover, if he were alive, he would not be obliged to know every single matter that the Prophet (pbuh) commanded, forbade, or told about [that is, it is enough to believe without details]. Indeed, he must know what he was obliged to do and what he was prohibited from getting involved in. This person will be obligated only to the general Iman that existed before his death and nothing else and before other details of Iman reached him.

Moreover, if it is assumed that such a person did live, then not every ordinary person is required to know everything that the Prophet commanded, everything he forbade, and everything he reported. Rather, all he is expected to know is what he himself is required or forbidden to do. For example, someone with no wealth will not be expected to know the Prophet's detailed commands relating to the payment of zakah, nor would someone unable to undertake the pilgrimage be required to know the Prophet's commands concerning the pilgrimage rites, just as someone who is not married is not required to know what his duties would be toward a wife. Hence, the belief required of some individuals differs from that required of others, both with respect to what one believes and what one practices.

This clarifies the answer to their [Murj'ites] claim that people were addressed concerning Iman were made obligatory before works. Against this, the author remarks: If they say that people were addressed about Iman before works, then before these works became obligatory, they were not part of Iman. Hence, believers [at that time] were true believers, for they believed in what was obligatory for them. However, when it is revealed that works are part of one's Iman, then believers must perform them; otherwise, they are no longer [true] believers. And for this reason Allah says: ". . . And pilgrimage to the House is a duty that people owe to Allah, those who can afford the expense; and those who disbelieve, then Allah stands not in need of any of the creatures [mankind and jinns]" (3:97). Therefore, most traditions in which mention is made of Islam and belief do not speak of the pilgrimage. One such tradition concerns the delegation of ʿAbd al-Qays, while another concerns the man from Najd, Ḍamām Ibn Thaʿlabah, and others. The pilgrimage is indeed mentioned in the tradition of Ibn ʿUmar and Gabriel, since the pilgrimage was the last of the five pillars of Islam to be legislated. Prior to its being legislated, it was not considered part of either belief or Islam. When it was legislated, however, the Prophet (pbuh) introduced the pilgrimage into [the requirements of] belief alone, and into Islam, whether spoken of in conjunction with belief or apart from it. Allah willing, we shall have more to say below concerning when the pilgrimage was established as a religious duty.

From this it becomes clear also how to respond to their [Murji'ites] claim that whoever believes and dies before works are made obligatory, dies as a believer. This is correct, for he had accomplished the obligations required for his Iman before works were made obligatory for his Iman. It is necessary to know this, since by knowing it the doubt will be lifted.

If it is said that obligatory works are part of Iman, then it should be clear that the obligatory Iman is not one thing but many things for different people. Orthodox Muslims say that all good works [whether obligatory or merely desirable] are part of Iman. That is, they are part of the perfect, desirable Iman, but not the obligatory Iman. Thus he differentiated between the obligatory Iman and the perfect, desirable Iman, as the Muslim scholars say that the ghusl, *ablution,* is of two kinds: either being rewarded for doing the obligatory or for performing the perfect of the desirables. The expression "perfect" may refer to the obligatory as well as to the desirable Iman.

However, their claim that Allah has differentiated, in many places, between Iman and works is correct. And the author has indicated that Iman, when used in an absolute sense, is included by Allah and His Messenger in the obligatory works. And Iman may be associated with works, and we have already mentioned many examples to prove this. For the essence of Iman is what is in the heart, as well as the outward works that are a necessary part of this. Thus, one cannot imagine the existence of the required Iman of the heart without it being accompanied with all the works of parts of the body. Indeed, whenever outward works diminish, it would be so due to the diminishing of Iman that is in the heart. Since it is conjoined with works, this means that Iman in the heart is not enough, but must be accompanied by good works.

People have taken two different positions concerning this notion [i.e., that the root of belief exists within the heart, but that it must be spoken of in association with good works, since these are considered to be a necessary outcome or component of true belief]. There are those who say that the second term [namely, good works] forms part of the first [namely, belief]; however, such works are specifically mentioned by name lest it be thought that they are not included in the first term [belief]. People holding this view note that this occurs whenever a more specific aspect of something is mentioned in conjunction with a more general, inclusive term, as when Allah says: "Whoever is an enemy to Allah, His Angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael . . ." (2:98); and "And when We took from the Prophets their Covenant, from you [Oh, Muḥammad], and from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, son of Mary . . ." (33:7); and "But those who believe and do righteous good works, and believe in that which is sent down to Muḥammad, for it is the Truth from their Lord . . ." (47:2), where belief is defined specifically in terms of that which was revealed to Muḥammad. When Allah mentions "those who have believed," He is referring to the Prophet's Companions and other believers. Likewise Allah says: "Guard strictly the [five obligatory] prayers and especially the middle prayer . . ." (2:238); and "And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him alone and offer prayers and give zakah . . ." (98:5). Allah's primary intent is that he alone be worshiped; He also intends for prayer to be established and charity to be practiced in order to indicate that they are obligatory acts of worship. Thus, it is not enough to worship none but Allah without prayer and charity. Hence, one should not think that it is enough to have Iman without righteous works. Moreover, belief is

mentioned first because it is the indispensable root; following this, good works are mentioned since they are a necessary component of the perfect practice of religion, lest anyone should suppose that either belief or religion may be considered complete if one has belief alone without good works. Allah says: "Alif. Lām. Mīm. This the Book [the Qur'ān], whereof there is no doubt, is a guidance to those who are the righteous ones. Who believe in the Unseen and offer the prayers and spend out of what We have provided for them. And those who believe in that which has been revealed to you [Muḥammad] and in that which was revealed before you [i.e., the Torah and the Gospel] and they believe in the Hereafter. They are on [true] guidance from their Lord, and also they are the successful ones" (2:1–5). It has been said that those spoken of in this verse are the People of the Book, such as Ibn Salām and others, who believed in what had been revealed to Muḥammad and to others before him, but that they belong to a different category than those mentioned earlier, namely, "those who believe in the Unseen." Others, however, have held that all those spoken of here—those who have believed in what was revealed to Muḥammad and to the Prophets who came before him, and those who believe in the Unseen—belong to a single group, and have been spoken of separately simply to bring out different ways in which they can be described. A similar use of conjunctions to describe a single entity may be seen in the verses where Allah says: "Glory be the Name of your Lord, the Most High, Who has created [everything], and then proportioned it, and Who measured and then guided. And Who brings out the pasturage. And then makes it dark stubble" (87:1–5). For Allah Almighty is One, but various of His attributes and activities have been spoken of in conjunction with others. The same applies to the verse where Allah says: ". . . The middle prayer . . ." (2:238); it is the late afternoon prayer mentioned in conjunction with prayer in general, of which the afternoon prayer is one example.

When attributes are used within the definite, they are being employed for clarification; and they may also imply either praise or blame. You might say, for example, "this man is the one who did such and such, or such and such and such and such," thereby enumerating the praiseworthy things he has done. Therefore, with subordinate components, they may be associated with something via a conjunctive particle, or be placed in the accusative or in the nominative cases, which is correct. For if those who believe in the Unseen do not believe in what has been revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad [with reference to the verses above] and

to the prophets who came before him, then neither are they rightly guided by their Lord, nor are they spiritually prosperous or fearers of Allah. Likewise, if those who believe in what was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad and to the prophets who came before him are not included among those who believe in the Unseen, perform the ritual prayers, and spend [wisely] the wealth that Allah gives them, neither will they be rightly guided by their Lord, nor will they prosper spiritually or be fearers of Allah. And what this indicates is that all these attributes describe those who are rightly guided, Allah-fearing people whose guidance has come from the Book revealed to Muḥammad (pbuh); for one attribute has been mentioned in conjunction with another, even though one of them actually represents part of the other. The intent [of such passages in the Qur'ān] is to describe their belief, affirming that they believe in all that Allah has revealed to His Prophets and that they make no distinction between one prophet and another. Otherwise, if no mention were made of anything but belief in the Unseen, then someone might say: "I believe in the Unseen," when in fact he believes in [only] some of the things in which he is required to believe but not others.

Since Sūrat al-Baqarah is the sinām, *hump,* of the Qur'ān and the first sūrah revealed in Madīnah, Allah begins with four verses that describe traits of the believers, two verses about unbelievers, and several about hypocrites. For when the Prophet (pbuh) emigrated to Madīnah, people divided into three groups: believers, unbelievers who outwardly manifested their rejection of Iman, and hypocrites. Indeed, this was not the case when they were in Makkah, where there was not a single hypocrite. This is why Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and others said that there was not a single hypocrite among those who emigrated. But hypocrisy prevailed among the tribes of al-Anṣār, *the Helpers,* for Makkah was dominated by unbelievers. Thus, no one believed or emigrated out of Makkah unless he was a believer, so there was no need for one to be a hypocrite there. However, in Madīnah the people of influence became believers. Thus, the believers have protection and dignity through al-Anṣār who used to harm whoever was not a believer. Therefore, the hypocrites found it necessary to pretend that they were believers although they had no Iman in their hearts. Indeed, in the beginning of Sūrat al-Baqarah, its middle verses, and its end verses, Allah stresses the necessity of having Iman in all that was sent down by the prophets. In the opening of the Sūrah, He utters the verse sited above. In the middle of the Sūrah, He says: "Say you: We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail,

Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to [all] Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to Allah [in Islam]. So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right path; but if they turn back, it is they who are in schism . . ." (2:136–37). In the end of the Sūrah, He says: ". . . The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of belief. Each one [of them] believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. 'We make no distinction [they say] between one and another of His Messengers.' And they say: 'We hear, and we obey: [we seek] Your forgiveness, Our Lord, and with you is our destiny'" (2:285).

It was reported in the two famous sound collections of ḥadith that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever recites the last two verses of Sūrat al-Baqarah, *Chapter of the Cow,* at night will suffice him." He also said: "That he [the Prophet] used to recite the middle verse." The Prophet used to recite these verses during the two rakʿahs, *prostrations,* of the Fajr, *dawn,* prayer. He also used to recite the following verse. Allah says: "Say [Oh, Muḥammad]: 'Oh, people of the Scripture [Jews and Christians] come to a word that is just between us and you . . .'" (3:64). At other times the Prophet recited the Sūrat al-Kāfirūn, *Chapter of Unbelievers,* and the Sūrat al-Ikhlās, *Chapter of Sincerity,* which starts with: "Say [Oh, Muḥammad] Allah is One" (112:1). Thus the Prophet used to recite verses that have reference to Iman and Islam as well as reference to Oneness of Allah and Sincerity.

Refuting the claim of the Murjiʾites [that works are not implied in Iman as the above-mentioned verses indicate since these verses conjoin deeds with Iman, and this conjunction requires that they be distinguished from each other] the author argues that the righteous works associated with Iman are implied in Iman itself. They are related to it as the specific is related to the general, either by mentioning the specific after the general; or by being mentioned in conjunction with it to indicate that it is not implied in the general. It has been said that works were not originally part of Iman and that the essence of Iman is what is in the heart, while works are necessary for Iman. Hence, if anyone does not do righteousness, his Iman is negated. For the negation of a necessary feature requires the negation of the entity of which it is a necessary feature. But by virtue of the Legislator's [the Prophet's] customary usage of the term Iman, works came to be implied in its meaning if the word Iman is applied in an absolute sense. As was mentioned

earlier by the Prophet: "None among you believes until one loves for his brother what he loves for himself;" and "None among you believe if his neighbor is endangered by his injurious conduct." Hence, if works are conjoined with Iman, it would be mentioned, so that one should not think that his mere Iman, without righteous works, which are necessary for Iman, leads to Paradise. To put it differently, the specific mention of works was to affirm that the reward in the Hereafter [entering Paradise without punishment] is not for someone who claims that he is a believer, although he does not work righteousness; but for one who believes and does righteousness. Allah indicates, in many verses, that when the righteous say "I believe," they must perform the obligations. The restriction of Iman to this group only reveals that those outside this group do not possess Iman.

In this regard, the Jahmites raised a question that is mentioned by Abu al-Ḥassan al-Ash<u></u>ʿarī in his book entitled the Concise *al-Mūjaz,* the question being whether, according to the Qurʾān, belief may only be ascribed to those who, although they profess to believe, do not perform good works. Allah says: "The believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts . . ." (8:2). However, it is not stated here that such works are part of belief. Rather, they said that whoever does not perform these works in this manner is not a believer, because the absence of such a response is evidence that knowledge is likewise absent from such a person's heart.

A response to this position may be made based on the following observations. First, those who held this view acknowledged that good works are associated with belief of the heart by necessity, such that if they are not present, neither may the required belief be said to reside in the heart. However, if this is the case, then the question of whether such works are associated with belief by necessity, or an actual component of belief, becomes a mere dispute over words. Second, there are passages in ḥadith literature that state explicitly that such works are actually a part of belief, as in the tradition that says: "Iman has sixty or seventy-odd branches." Third, if it is claimed that whoever does not exhibit such outward behaviors is devoid of all belief, then one has adopted the same view as the Khārijites. However, since those who are making this claim also claim to be on the opposite end of the spectrum from the Khārijites, how can they then be in agreement with them? For among the works included here are ritual prayers, giving of zakah, fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, making the pilgrimage to Makkah, engaging

in jihād, *striving in the Cause of Allah,* deferring to the rule of Allah and His Messenger, and other actions that those who claim to hold this view, would not view, as sufficient reason to declare someone an unbeliever. And if they did declare such a person an unbeliever, they would in essence be upholding the views of the Khārijites. Fourth, the claim that the absence or neglect of some of the works mentioned above requires that there will not be, in the heart of a person, the slightest belief in the truth of the Lord's existence. This statement is so patently groundless as to need no refutation. Fifth, if this view [i.e., the fourth] were shown to be true with respect to those duties mentioned above, then it would likewise be true of all other outward requirements of Islam, as a result of which the semantic debate would be eliminated.

Chapter Sixteen

The Murjiʾites' Views On Iman, Works, and Religion

The second aspect of the false argument of the Murjiʾites is their belief that Iman is only in the heart is taṣdīq, *assent,* without any works of the heart, which has already been pointed out in the previous discussion concerning the opinion of the Murjiʾite sect, who followed Jahm.[1]

The third false argument is that they [the Murjiʾites] thought that Iman that is in the heart is complete without any works. So they regarded works as the product and necessary outgrowth of Iman, in the rank of cause and effect, but not as an essential requirement for Iman. Against this, the author argues that the complete Iman of the heart must be accompanied by righteous works and that Iman of the heart is never perfect without them. For this reason, the Murjiʾites presumed the possibility of matters that never occurred due to their failure to affirm the connection between the body and the heart. For example, they said a man may have Iman in his heart similar to that of Abu Bakr [al-Ṣiddīq] and ʿUmar [Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb], although he neither prostrates nor fasts during Ramaḍān, fornicates with his mother and his sister, and drinks wine in the daylight hours of Ramaḍān. They [the Murjiʾites] say that such a man has complete Iman. On the contrary, all believers would absolutely deny such a claim.

[1] The editors of the different editions of *Kitab al-Iman* seem to differ on the organization and division of chapters 15 and 16. MI.1, MI.2, and MKH, the editions that have been basically adapted for this translation, begin chapter 16 with a discussion of the second error of the Murjiʾites, whereas MZ combines the two chapters (see pp. 186–203). The editor of MZ has some justification for combining the two chapters, since the discussion deals with the same topic (i.e., the two errors of the Murjiʾites). However, the translators have preferred to adhere to the organization maintained in the editions mentioned above.

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal said that Khalaf Ibn Ḥayyān related on the authority of Maʿqal Ibn ʿUbayd Allah al-ʿAbsī,[2] who said that Sālim al-Afṭas came to us believing in the Murjiʾite's sayings; hence, our companions detested him and completely rejected his sayings, among them Maymūn Ibn Mahrān[3] and ʿAbd al-Karīm Ibn Mālik,[4] who gave a promise to Allah that he would never be under the same roof of a house with him except in the mosque. Maʿqal also said that he made a pilgrimage [to Makkah] and then he came upon ʿAṭāʾ Ibn Abī Rabāḥ with a group of his [Maʿqal's] companions while he was reciting the following Qurʾānic verse. Allah says: "Until the Messengers despaired and thought that they were falsified . . ." (12:110). Maʿqal further said: "I have a request and I need to talk to you alone." When he did, I told him that some people before had brought forward innovative ideas and arguments in which they said that prayer and giving zakah are not part of religion. Upon this he responded: Did not Allah say that, as in the following verse? Allah says: "And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him alone, offering prayers, giving zakah: and that is the Right Religion" (98:5). Hence, offering prayer and giving zakah are part of religion. He then said that I said that they said that there is no increase in Iman. Then he said that Iman does not increase. He responded: Did not Allah say [as in the following verse]: ". . . That they may increase Belief to their Belief? . . ." (48:4). I said that they quoted your name as saying that, and I heard that Ibn Dharr[5] came to you with his companions and presented this saying of the Murjiʾites and you accepted it. Upon this he [Maʿqal] said two or three times I swear by Allah, Who there is no god but Him, that I did not. Then he said that I came to Madīnah and sat with Nāfiʿ.[6] I said to him: "Oh, Abu ʿAbd Allah, I have a request of you." He replied: "Is it a secret or something that can be declared publicly?" He responded: "It is a secret." I answered: "Many a secret has come to no good." He

[2] Maʿqal Ibn ʿUbayd Allah al-ʿAbsī (?–166 A.H.) was a compiler and transmitter of ḥadith from ʿAṭāʾ Ibn Abī Rabāḥ and al-Zuhrī. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 189.]

[3] Maymūn Ibn Mahrān Abu Ayyūb (?–117 A.H.) was a jurist, a scholar of ḥadith, and a judge in al-Jazīrah during the reign of the Caliph ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 190.]

[4] ʿAbd al-Karīm Ibn Mālik (?–127 A.H.) was a compiler and a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, page 190.]

[5] Ibn Dharr, Abu Dharr ʿUmar al-Hamadānī (?–156 A.H.), was a scholar and narrator of ḥadith and a leading figure of the Murjiʾite sect. [Al-Zirkilī, vol. 5, page 205 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, page 190.]

[6] Nāfiʿ Abu ʿAbd Allah (?–117 A.H.) was one of the famous Successors, a trustworthy jurist, and a scholar of ḥadith. He was also a client of Ibn ʿUmar. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, 190.]

replied: "It shall not be so." I reassured him. Then we prayed the afternoon prayer, after which he got up and took hold of my robe. Then he came out of the chamber and did not wait for [me], the one seeking him. "What is your request?" he asked. I replied: "Stand aside." So I told him what they had said, and he replied that the Messenger (pbuh) said: "I have been commanded to strike them with my sword until they say: 'There is no god but Allah'. If they do say it, they have protected their souls and their wealth by truly uttering it, while their final reckoning shall be with Allah." Then I told him that they said that we acknowledged that prayer is a duty incumbent upon us, though we do not pray, that alcoholic beverages are forbidden to us, though we drink them, and that we are forbidden to marry mothers, though we do so. Then he withdrew his hand violently from mine and said that whoever does such things is an unbeliever.

Maʿqal said that he saw al-Zuhrī and told him about their saying. He said: "Glory to Allah! Do people quarrel about such issues?" [He was astonished to hear such ideas, which result in many controversies.] The Prophet (pbuh) said: "A fornicator who fornicates is not considered a believer as long as he continues to do so, and no one who drinks wine is considered a believer as long as he continues to do so." Maʿqal said: "I met al-Ḥakam Ibn ʿUtaybah[7] and said to him that I was told by ʿAbd al-Karīm and Maymūn that some of the Murji'ites came to present their views to you, and that you accepted them." He [al-Ḥakam] replied: "Maymūn and ʿAbd al-Karīm reported that about me? While I was sick I was visited by twelve men who said to me: 'Abu Muḥammad, have you heard that a man came to the Prophet (pbuh) with a black maiden or an Abyssinian slave! When he approached the Prophet, he said Oh, Messenger of Allah, I have to emancipate a believing slave. Do you see this slave as a believer?'" The Messenger asked the slave: "Do you testify that there is no god but Allah?" Upon this, the slave replied: "Yes." The Prophet added: "Do you testify that Muḥammad is a Messenger of Allah?" She answered: "Yes." He [the Prophet] then said: "Do you testify that Paradise and Hell are real?" She answered: "Yes." He [the Prophet] then asked: "Do you testify that Allah resurrects you back to life [after death]?" She replied: "Yes." Upon this, the Prophet said: "Emancipate her. Indeed, she is a believer." Then they departed, thinking about the argument.

[7] Al-Hakam Ibn ʿUtaybah, Abu Muḥammad (?–115 A.H.), was a celebrated jurist and a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p.191.]

Maʿqal said that once he sat next to Maymūn Ibn Mahrān and asked him to recite and then explain a Sūrah of the Qurʾān. Then Maymūn recited what Allah says: "When the sun with its spacious light is folded up" (81:1), up until "With authority there, and faithful to his trust" (81:21). Then he said that here Gabriel is meant. Failure awaits whoever said that his Iman is like that of Gabriel. Supporting this is the account of Ḥanbal,[8] on the authority of Aḥmad and also narrated by Ibn Abī Malīkah.[9] He [Ḥanbal] said: "Ages have passed by and I have never encountered in a people anyone who said:'I am a true believer.'" He was not satisfied until he had said: "My belief is like that of Gabriel and Michael." And Satan continued to harass them until one of them said: "I am a believer," even though he had taken his sister, his mother, and his daughter as wives. This is what I have come to understand from the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh), none of whom died without fearing for himself lest he be found to be a hypocrite. The same meaning was also reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.* He said: "I realized that thirty of the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) feared becoming hypocrites, and none of them ever said that his Iman was like that of Gabriel."

Al-Baghawī related on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn Muḥammad that Ibn Mujāhid said: "While I was sitting with ʿAṭāʾ Ibn Abī Rabāḥ, his son Yaʿqūb entered and said: 'Oh, father, some of my companions claim that their Iman is like that of Gabriel.' Upon this, he [ʿAṭāʾ] answered: 'Oh my dear son, the Iman of the one who obeys Allah is not like that of someone who disobeyed Him.'"

The Murjiʾites' Views on Works: Are They Part of Iman or Religion?

We said that the claim that prayer and giving zakah are not part of religion may be a position that was held by only some of the Murjiʾites. However, all of them held that these duties are not part of belief. As for their part in religion, some of them are reported to have said that these duties were not part of religion; moreover, we make no distinction between belief and religion. However, some of them said that these two duties are indeed part of religion, and [thus] a distinction must be made between the terms "belief" and "religion." These were the claims

[8] The full name of Ḥanbal is Ḥanbal Ibn Hilāl al-Shaybānī, a cousin of Iman Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. He worked on history and ḥadiths.

[9] Ibn Abī Malīkah, ʿAbd Allah (?–117 A.H.), was the judge of Makkah during the time of Ibn al-Zubayr and a trusthworty narrator and compiler of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 192.]

that are known to have been made. However, I found that none of them claimed, in any of their writings, that good works are not part of religion; rather, they held that they are not part of belief. This is also what Abu ʿUbayd reported concerning the views of members of this sect who debated with him. Abu ʿUbayd and others argued that good works are indeed part of religion. In support of this Allah says: ". . . This day, I have perfected your religion for you . . ." (5:3). This verse was revealed as part of the farewell sermon that the Prophet preached. According to Abu ʿUbayd, the religion [of the Prophet's believing community] was brought to completion at the end of [this period of] Islam, with this speech given by the Prophet (pbuh). However, the Murjiʾites claimed that religion had reached completion twenty years before this, from the time when the revelation first descended upon the Prophet in Makkah and when the Prophet called upon people to acknowledge [Islam as the true religion]. He [Abu ʿUbayd] even said that some of them were obliged to retreat when the injunctions contained in this sermon were introduced into it. He also added that belief is not all of religion; rather, religion consists of three parts: belief, religious duties, and supererogatory acts of devotion.

This claim he made was the doctrine held by the majority of the people. But according to Abu ʿUbayd, it was not consistent with what the Book teaches. For did not Allah say: "Truly, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam . . ." (3:19); He also says: "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him . . ." (3:85); and He also says: ". . . And I have chosen for you Islam as your religion . . ." (5:3). All these verses indicate that Islam is religion in its entirety, while the Murjiʾites claimed that it represents only one-third of religion.

However, what they have said was not that belief is one-third of religion, but merely that belief is "a third." Moreover, they made a distinction between the concepts of "belief" and "religion." And, if Allah wills, we shall mention in the following what has been said concerning each of these. For some have been reported to have said that first of all, prayer and giving zakah are not part of religion, and second, that no distinction is to be made between the terms "belief" and "religion." Others, however, have insisted that both these practices are part of religion. Al-Shāfiʿī (may Allah be pleased with him) used to praise ʿAṭāʾ Ibn Abī Rabāḥ and said that none of the followers was better than ʿAṭaʾ in following ḥadith. Likewise, Abu Ḥanīfah said: "I have never seen anybody like ʿAṭaʾ." Al-Shāfiʿī cited this statement about ʿAṭāʾ [based on the conversation between

Maʿqal and ʿAṭā' about whether prayer is part of religion or not]. Ibn Abī Ḥātim narrated on the authority of his father, from ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Maymūnī, from Abu ʿUthmān Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-Shāfiʿī, that one night he heard his father saying to al-Ḥamīdī that the strongest refutation of the argument of the Murji'tes was the following saying of Allah: "And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true [in belief]; to establish regular prayer; and to give zakah; and that is the Religion Right and Straight" (98:5).

In his book *al-Umm, (The Mother),* in the Chapter on Intent, al-Shāfiʿī also said that no prayer is adequate without good intent, as indicated in the saying of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Prophet (pbuh): "Deeds are recorded according to the intentions of those who perform them." He further said: "The Companions and the followers unanimously agree upon the saying that Iman is an utterance, a work, and an intent. None of these three matters is regarded without the other two."

Ḥanbal said that al-Ḥamīdī reported that he heard that some people say that whoever acknowledged the duties of prayer, giving zakah, fasting, and pilgrimage but did not practice any of them until he died, was a believer, provided he was not a denier, knowing that his abandonment of these duties was a constituent of Iman as long as he admitted the obligations and faced the qiblah [when he prayed]. The author refutes this argument as an explicit rejection of Iman, of the Book, of the Sunnah, and of the unanimity of the Muslim jurists. Allah says: "And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, to offer Him sincere devotion . . ." (98:5). Furthermore, Ḥanbal said that I heard Abu ʿAbd Allah Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal say that whoever said so [in agreement with al-Ḥamīdī], indeed, he has committed blasphemy and denied Allah's commands and rejected what the Messenger brought forward from Allah.

The Murji'ite's citation of the Prophet's statement: "Emancipate her [the slave girl]; indeed, she is a believer," is one of their famous arguments, based on which Ibn Kullāb said that Iman is both taṣdīq, *assent,* and qawl, *saying.* Against this, the author argues that this statement of the Prophet (pbuh) is not applicable here [cannot be generalized]. For manifest Iman, about which worldly judgments may be made, does not necessitate the existence of inner Iman, whose adherent will enjoy happiness in the Hereafter. Allah says hypocrites are those who say: ". . . We

believe in Allah and the Last Day; but they do not [really] believe" (2:8). Outwardly they pretend to be believers. For they pray, fast, go on pilgrimage, invade, inherit from Muslims, and marry Muslims in the same way hypocrites used to do during the time of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). The Prophet did not regard them as unbelievers who manifested their unbelief neither in their marriage nor inheritance practices nor anything else. Rather, when ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ubay Ibn Salūl, one of the most notorious hypocrites, died, his heir was his son ʿAbd Allah, who was among the most virtuous believers. Similarly, in the cases of all other hypocrites who died, their inheritances were passed on to their believing heirs. And if any heirs to any of them died, they in turn were this person's heirs along with the Muslims.

Judgment Concerning the Hypocrite Who Conceals His Atheism

Indeed, Muslim jurists have debated about whether atheist hypocrites, who hide their unbelief, should inherit and leave an inheritance or not. However, the author argues that they inherit and leave an inheritance even if they are known to be covertly hypocrites, as was the case in the time of the Prophet (pbuh). For inheritance is based on overt support for the Prophet (pbuh) but not on the hidden devotion of the heart. Indeed, the Prophet's saying: "An unbeliever never inherits from a Muslim and a Muslim never inherits from an unbeliever," does not include hypocrites, although in the Hereafter they are in the lowest reaches of Hellfire. But they used to bequeath and inherit in the same way Muslims do. Likewise, they had the same rights and were subject to the same limitations as all other Muslims. Moreover, Allah states that even though they establish prayer and give zakah, they are not accepted by Him. He [Allah] says: "The only reasons why their contributions are not accepted are that they reject Allah and His Messenger; that they come to prayer without earnestness; and that they offer contributions unwillingly" (9:54). He also says: "The hypocrites—they think they are overreaching Allah, but He will overreach them: When they stand up to pray, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance" (4:142). It was recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* that the Prophet said: "Here is how a hypocrite prays [he said this three times]; he intends to observe the sun until it sets between the two horns of Satan. Then, he stands up to pray and quickly performs four rakʿas, but little does he hold Allah in remembrance."

Hypocrites also used to accompany the Prophet on his expeditions, as Ibn Ubay once did on the expedition of Banī al-Muṣṭalaq, where the Prophet said this verse from the Qur'ān: "... [The hypocrites] said: 'If we return to Madīnah, indeed the more honorable will expel from it the meaner ones ...'" (63:8).

In the two collections of sound ḥadiths, it is related on the authority of Zayd Ibn Arqam, who said: "We went out with the Prophet (pbuh) on an arduous journey during which people suffered severely." So ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ubay said to his followers: "Spend none of your wealth on those who are with the Messenger of Allah so that those gathered about him will be scattered." And he also said: "... [The hypocrites] said: 'If we return to Madīnah, indeed the more honorable will expel from it the meaner ones ....'" So I [Zayd Ibn Arqam] came to the Prophet and informed him of the matter, and he in turn sent a message to ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ubay, asking him about what he had done. He [ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ubay] replied that Zayd had lied to the Messenger of Allah. I was quite distraught by what they had said until Allah revealed that I am telling the truth, saying: "When the hypocrites come to you [Oh, Muḥammad] ..." (63:1). Then the Prophet (pbuh) summoned them so that he might pray to Allah to forgive them, and they bowed their heads. On the occasion of the Tabūk expedition the Prophet (pbuh) called them to take up arms, just as he and the rest did. Some of them accompanied the Prophet (pbuh), and some did not. On the way, some of those who joined him tried to kill him by unfastening the cinch of his she-camel so that he would fall into a valley. However, he received a revelation and then confided their names in secret to Ḥudhayfah. [Therefore, he is called 'the man of the secret' as cited in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*.] In spite of all this, they were overtly treated in the same way as believers.

This section clarifies many doubts. For example, many of the followers classified those who outwardly professed Islam either as just or wicked. But they avoided making a decision about hypocrites, who were, are, and will be living among us until the Judgment Day. Hypocrisy has many branches. And the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) feared becoming hypocrites.

For example, it was recorded in both *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Three are the signs of a hypocrite; when he speaks he tells a lie, when he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he is trusted, he betrays the trust." Muslim recorded this ḥadith with the following addition: "... even if he observes the fast and prays and asserts that he is a Muslim."

In the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* it was recorded, on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr, that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Four attributes can be seen in someone who is considered a manifest hypocrite. And he who possesses one of them, indeed, possesses a characteristic of hypocrisy until he abandons it; when he speaks he tells a lie, when he is trusted he betrays the trust, when he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he quarrels he behaves traitorously."

The Prophet (pbuh) used to pray for them and ask Allah to forgive them until Allah forbade him to do this. Allah says: "Nor do you ever pray for any of them that dies, nor stand at his grave . . ." (9:84). And He says: "Whether you ask for their forgiveness, or not [their sin is unforgivable]: If you ask seventy times for their forgiveness, Allah will not forgive them . . ." (9:80). From that time on, the Prophet (pbuh) stopped praying for them and asking for their forgiveness. But, unlike the unbelievers, their blood and property are protected [for they overtly behave as Muslims]. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "I have been commanded to fight against people until they admit that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. And when they do it, their blood and property are guaranteed protection on my behalf except for the right, and their affairs rest with Allah." And then he said to Usāmah Ibn Zayd: "Have you killed him after he said that there is no god but Allah?" Upon this, Usāmah replied: "He said so to seek protection." The Prophet (pbuh) added: "But, have you opened his heart [to justify what you did]?" He further said: "I have been commanded neither to go in search of people's hearts nor to split open their stomachs." When the Prophet (pbuh) was asked for his permission to kill a man, he used to ask: "Does he [the man] pray? Does he not testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger?" If it was said that he was a hypocrite, he [the Prophet] used to say: "Do not kill him." Hence, he used to protect people's blood and property unless they overtly rejected Iman [whether he knew that some of them were hypocrites or not]. Allah says: "Certain of the desert Arabs around you are hypocrites, as well as the People of Madīnah. They are obstinate in hypocrisy. Although you do not know them; We know them; twice shall We punish them, and in addition shall they be sent to a grievous Penalty" (9:101). Whenever one of them died, Muslims used to pray for them, provided that they did not know that they were hypocrites, but if they knew, they would refrain. ʿUmar [al-Khaṭṭāb] used to not pray for a dead man until Ḥudhayfah prayed for him for Ḥudhayfah had better knowledge than others about hypocrites because the Prophet (pbuh) had mentioned their

names to him in secret. Allah says: "Oh, you who believe! When believing women come to you as emigrants, examine them, Allah knows best as to their belief, then if you know them to be true believers, do not send them back to the unbelievers . . ."(60:10). Thus here he was commanded to examine them, and then followed that by saying: "Allah knows best as to their belief."

Moreover, when Allah commands Muslims to emancipate a believing slave as an atonement for sin, He does not stipulate that he had to be a true believer. Neither were they commanded to go in search of people's hearts nor to open their stomachs. But, if they found a man who manifested Iman, they were allowed to emancipate him. This applies to the owner of the slave girl [mentioned previously]. When the Prophet (pbuh) asked the owner: "Is she a believer?" the Prophet (pbuh) meant, "Is she a believer outwardly?" The same is true of someone who has to emancipate a believing slave in fulfillment of a vow. He is to emancipate an overtly believing slave. For no creature can judge someone else's inner Iman. Indeed, no human being can ever know such a thing [i.e., whether someone else has belief in his heart] for certain. Even the Messenger of Allah, the most knowledgeable of all human beings, was told by Allah: "Certain of the desert Arabs around you are hypocrites, as well as the People of Madīnah. They are obstinate in hypocrisy. Although you [Oh Muḥammad] do not know them; We know them; twice shall We punish them . . ." (9:101). The people mentioned in this verse were being judged by the Prophet to be believers, and if any of them had died, he would have prayed over that person's funeral procession. For he was only forbidden to pray for someone whom he knew to be a hypocrite; otherwise, he would have had to have the capacity to plumb the depths of peoples' souls and know their innermost secrets, which is something no mere human being is capable of.

When Allah reveals hypocrites' secrets in Sūrat Barā'ah, He says: "And among them . . . , and among them . . ." (IX:49)[10] and the hidden hypocrisy of some of them was unveiled. For Allah attributes some traits to hypocrites that were unknown [to many people] as traits that inevitably characterize hypocrites, although some of them thought and others knew what they were. Indeed, their hypocrisy was unknown to the public until the Qur'ān was revealed. When Sūrat

[10] The chapter titled Sūrat Barā'ah is also commonly known as Sūrat al-Tawbah. The reference above, wa minhum, *from among them,* occurs at the beginning of verses 49, 58, and 75.

Barā'ah was revealed, they hid their hypocrisy and no longer could reveal it. Allah says: "If the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who spread news among the people in Madīnah, do not cease, We shall certainly let you overpower them, then they will not be able to stay in it as your neighbors but for a little while. They shall have a curse on them: wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain [without mercy]. That was the way of Allah in the case of those who disappeared a long time ago, and you will not find any change in the way of Allah" (33:60–62). Whenever they were warned that they would be killed if they revealed this hypocrisy, they hid it.

For this reason, when Muslim jurists debated about the acceptance of a zindīq's, *atheist's,* repentance, it was said that his repentance was accepted. This saying was derived from the cases wherein the Prophet (pbuh) accepted their overt repentance but relied on Allah for the acceptance of their inner repentance. Against this, the author argues that this was the case before the revelation of this verse. Allah says: "They shall have a curse on them: wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain [without mercy]" (33:61). Afterward, they knew that if they persisted in their hypocrisy as they did previously, they would be killed. So they hid it.

As for the person referred to as an zindīq, *atheist,* he is likewise a hypocrite, and is to be killed by anyone who discovers that he has been concealing his hypocrisy. It has been said that one cannot be certain whether such a person's repentance is sincere, since the most that one may ascertain concerning what is inside him is what he manifests outwardly, and he may have been displaying belief even though he is a hypocrite. Moreover, if you were to accept the repentance of such atheists, there would be no way to carry out the injunction to kill them, which is the punishment with which they are threatened by the Qur'ān.

In other words, the Prophet (pbuh) judged, on the basis of overt pieces of evidence, that the slave girl was overtly a believer. Otherwise, it was firmly mentioned that when Saʿd testified that the man was a believer, the Prophet (pbuh) remarked: "or a Muslim," even though this man manifested more overt belief than that of the slave girl. Hence, one has to distinguish between judgments of overt Iman by people in this world and judgments in the Hereafter concerning reward and punishment. Accordingly, the believer who deserves Paradise must be a believer in his heart as unanimously agreed upon by all of the people of the Qiblah [those who turn toward Makkah to pray]. Even the Karrāmite sect, who called a

hypocrite a believer, said that Iman is al-kalimah, *the word (testimony),* and that is to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger and that nothing is beneficial in the Hereafter except inner Iman.

Some have reported that they [the Karrāmites] considered hypocrites to be among those who will enter Paradise. However, this is an error on their part. For they disputed over the name rather than over the verdict to be issued as to a person's actual spiritual state due to the specious argument put forward by the Murjiʾites to the effect that belief may not be subdivided or ranked as to superior or inferior. For this reason, that which Islamic jurists have primarily based their judgments on with regard to the neck [i.e., the person] who was to be rewarded through penance was one's outward works. They also disputed the question as to whether a child should be rewarded. Two well-known positions have been taken by the pious ancestors with regard to this question, both of which have been passed down in accounts on the authority of Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal]. According to one position, his emancipation may not be rewarded since belief consists of both a saying and a work, and a child has not believed by himself; rather, judged by worldly standards, his faith is dependent on that of his parents. Nor has anyone laid down the condition that it must be known for certain that he is a believer inwardly. According to the opposing view, the child's emancipation will be rewarded because emancipation is determined by external judgments, and is something that depends on his parents. For just as he inherits from them and is prayed for, and since only a believer may be prayed for, then he is eligible for emancipation.

Likewise, hypocrites who have not let their hypocrisy become manifest outwardly have been prayed for when they die and have been buried in the same cemeteries as Muslims ever since the time of the Prophet (pbuh). The cemetery that was set aside for Muslims during the Prophet's lifetime and during the lifetimes of his Successors and Companions was the place where they buried all those who had manifested belief outwardly, even if they had been hypocrites. Hence, there was no cemetery designated for hypocrites, as distinguished from Muslims, in the way there were cemeteries especially for Jews and Christians. Whoever was buried in a cemetery for Muslims would be prayed for by Muslims, although the Qur'ān forbids prayer for anyone who was known to be a hypocrite. This, of course, is based on belief that is displayed outwardly, for only Allah knows the secrets of the heart. Hence, the Prophet (pbuh) used to pray for all Muslims who died, asking Allah to forgive their sins, until he was forbidden to do so. And this [prohibition]

was explained as being due to unbelief. [However, the Prophet's former practice] was an indication that it was permissible to pray for anyone not known for certain to be an unbeliever in his heart, even if he was heretical in his doctrines and had committed sins.

If the Imām, *prayer leader,* or the people of knowledge and religion abandoned prayer for those who show heresy or wickedness when they die, in order to show disapproval of their works, this does not mean that it is prohibited to pray for them or ask Allah for their forgiveness. On the contrary, the Prophet (pbuh) told the ones who used to refrain from praying for those who include among others, the miser, the one who intentionally kills himself, and the one who does not pay his debts: "Pray for your friends." Moreover, it is related on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh) that he used to ask Allah for their forgiveness in his heart, although he [himself] used to refrain from praying for them publicly, as it was narrated in the ḥadith of Mulḥim Ibn Juththāmah.[11]

In the Book and the Sunnah, people who manifest Islam are of two kinds, either believers or hypocrites. The hypocrites are in the lowest part of Hell. And the believer may have decreased Iman and thus will not be covered by the generalization of this term, or he may have complete Iman. A discussion of this will be included below, if Allah wills, in connection with the question of Islam and belief, along with the names used to describe major sinners who are nevertheless members of a religious community. One should not be regarded implicitly as an unbeliever if he has committed a sin or embraced a heresy, even if he called others to practice that heresy, unless he is a hypocrite. That is, if in his heart he believed in the Messenger and what has been revealed through him but has erred in his heresy, then in principle, he is not an unbeliever. For example, the Khārijites went further than anyone else in manifesting heresy and killing others. In spite of this, however, none of the Companions of the Prophet, neither ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib nor others, ever considered them as unbelievers. They used to treat them in the way wrongdoing Muslims were treated.

Such is the case with the remaining seventy-two branches of Islam. Whoever is a hypocrite is [covertly] an unbeliever. In contrast, whoever is not a hypocrite but [covertly] a believer in Allah and His Messenger is not [covertly] an unbeliever,

[11] Mulḥim Ibn Juththāmah (n.d.) lived during the lifetime of the Prophet and most probably died during the time of Ibn al-Zubayr. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 200.]

even if he has erred in his interpretation [no matter what the error is]. He may also have some degree of hypocrisy, but this does not lead him to the lowest reaches of Hellfire. And whoever attributes unbelief to each of the seventy-two branches, violates what is in the Book and the Sunnah and what the Companions of the Prophet and the four religious leaders and other [scholars] have agreed unanimously upon. For none of them ever accused unbelief to any of the seventy-two branches of unbelief. This will be explained fully in its proper place.

However, authorities on Islam and its teachings have judged this view to be blasphemous, since it is a supposition that is intrinsically impossible. For it is impossible that someone who is a believer in his heart should do none whatsoever of the things which he has been commanded to do, such as prayer, giving zakah, fasting, and going on pilgrimage to Makkah, as well as engaging in whatever forbidden activities he is capable of, such as praying without having done the required ritual ablutions or without turning toward Makkah, or marrying mothers. Rather, one would only behave in this manner on account of an absence of belief from his heart. For this reason, the followers of Abu Ḥanīfah used to declare to be unbelievers various groups who made claims such as the one described here, because of the contempt that such suppositions imply [for the meaning of belief and Islam]. And during the debate over terminology and definitions which took place between Abu Ḥanīfah's followers and the majority of Islamic scholars, they labeled some of their opponents as apostates. This debate revolved around whether outward works are to be considered a part of belief or not. In this context, some later theologians posed another theoretical scenario that could not possibly take place: namely, someone who has acknowledged that prayer is his religious duty, is called to prayer yet refrains, even though he is called upon three times to repent under threat of death if he does not comply. Moreover, he continues to obstinately refuse until at last he is killed. So the question is: Will such an individual die as an unbeliever or simply as a believer who has committed major sins? On this question, two positions have been taken.

However, this entire scenario is intrinsically impossible. For if one believes that Allah imposes upon him the duty to pray and believes, moreover, that Allah will punish him for neglecting this duty, he would not patiently endure being killed rather than perform a prostration to Allah in prayer without having the slightest

excuse for such behavior. In fact, such a person would not even endure being beaten, much less being killed, without surrendering to the pressure and praying. And the reason for this is that to be killed is a kind of serious harm that no one would patiently endure except for the sake of some weighty cause, such as a religion to which he holds and which he believes that if he abandoned it, he would perish spiritually. This would apply whether the religion in and of itself were true or false. And if one believes both outwardly and inwardly that some action is his duty, then performance of such an action could not possibly be more difficult for him than enduring death at the hands of others.

The counterpart to this would be to say that an Orthodox Muslim was told: "Seek to please Abu Bakr and ʿUmar," yet he refused to do so until he was killed in spite of his love for both Caliphs, and in spite of the fact that he had no excuse that would prevent him from seeking to win their approval. No one whatsoever would conduct himself in this way. An equally impossible scenario would be to assume that there was someone who bore witness both outwardly and inwardly that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, yet although he was asked to give this testimony he refused to do so, despite the fact that there was no compulsion or desire on account of which he should refrain from doing so. It is for this reason that the verbal utterance of one's belief was considered by the majority of the pious ancestors, as well as by later Islamic scholars, to be part of that without which a servant of Allah may not escape perdition. The only group to disagree with this position were the Jahmites. So if it is assumed that someone is excused from voicing his belief because he is mute, or because he is fearful of people who might do him harm were he to manifest outwardly that he is a Muslim, then it would be possible for him not to speak of his belief even though he does have belief in his heart. The latter situation would apply to someone who uttered a statement of disbelief under duress. Allah says: "... Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is addressed with belief, but such as open their breasts to disbelief, on them is Wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a great torment" (16:106). This verse clearly shows the falsity of Jahm's view, for according to the Qur'ān, everyone who utters words indicating unbelief is to be considered an unbeliever under threat of divine retribution, unless he is among those who have been compelled to utter such words while their hearts are firm in belief.

If someone says, as Allah says: "But he whose heart is content in unbelief," the answer would be: this is in harmony with its beginning. For someone who of his own accord utters words manifesting unbelief is likewise someone who is content to be an unbeliever; otherwise, the last part of the verse would contradict the first part. Moreover, if the unbeliever is the person who is content in his unbelief and who voices such unbelief without compulsion, then an exception is made not only for the person who has been compelled to make such an utterance; rather, such an exception would apply both to the person who is compelled and to the person who is not compelled, yet feels no inward contentment upon making such an utterance. If, however, one voluntarily utters a declaration of unbelief, then one has gained some sense of satisfaction therefrom, and is thus an unbeliever. The proof of this is in the following saying of Allah: "The hypocrites fear lest a Sūrah [from the Qur'ān] should be revealed about them, showing them what is in their hearts. Say: '[Go ahead and] mock! But certainly Allah will bring to light all that you fear.' If you ask them [about this], they will declare: 'We were only talking idly and joking.' Say: 'Was it at Allah, and His Verses and His Messenger, that you were mocking? Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after you have believed. If We pardon some of you, We will punish others among you because they were criminals'" (9:64–66). This statement affirms that after becoming believers, they [the hypocrites] turned again to unbelief. They acknowledged that they spoke words of unbelief without actually being convinced of what they were saying. Rather, they claimed only to have been jesting. However, these verses make clear that mocking the signs of Allah, which could only come from someone who gained some degree of satisfaction from doing so, is tantamount to unbelief. For if someone had true belief in his heart, he would be unable to utter such words.

The Qur'ān indicates that Iman of the heart necessitates overt work, according to Allah's saying: "They [the hypocrites] say: 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey,' but even after that, some of them turn away, they are not [really] believers. When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them, behold, some of them decline [to come]. But if the right is on their side, they come to Him with all submission. But if the right is with them, they come to him willingly with submission. Is there a disease in their hearts? Or do they doubt or fear lest Allah and His Messenger should wrong them in

judgment. No, it is they themselves who are wrongdoers. The answer of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge among them, is no other than this: They say, 'We hear and we obey': and such are the successful ones" (24:47–51).[12] Accordingly, Allah refuses to attribute Iman to those who turn away from the obedience of the Messenger. And He notes that the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger in order that He may judge among them, hear and obey, thus indicating that hearing and obeying are among the requirements of Iman.

[12] The author cited only verses 47 and 48, indicating the omission of verses 49 and 50 with the phrase "to His saying." He then cited verse 51. For the reader's convenience, the translators have cited and translated the complete verses in sequence.

Chapter Seventeen

Iman Either Increases or Diminishes

If it is said: If absolute Iman includes all that Allah and His Messenger commanded, then, if some of the Iman diminishes, the sinners must be charged with unbelief, as the Khārijites claimed, or abide forever in Hell and be deprived of Iman, as the Muʿtazilites claimed. The claims of the Khārijites and the Muʿtazilites were more erroneous than the claims of the Murjiʾites. For there is a group among the Murjiʾites who were considered good and praiseworthy people. However, the Khārijites and the Muʿtazilites were condemned by the consensus of the Orthodox Muslim community.

It is said: It should be known that the views of Muʿtazilites and Khārijites, with which none of the Orthodox Muslims agreed, implied that the people who committed major sins would abide forever in Hell. This claim was one of the important innovations because the Companions and Successors of the Prophet (pbuh), their followers, and all religious Muslims agreed that whoever has an atom's weight of Iman in his heart will not abide forever in Hell. They also agreed that our Prophet (pbuh) would be among those who would intercede to seek Allah's permission for His intercession for the major sinners from his community. Indeed, both *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* relate that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Every prophet is allowed one answered prayer. As for me, I delayed my request in order to intercede for my community on Judgment Day." This ḥadith will be mentioned in its proper place. However, some people have falsely related some sayings on the authority of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh). For example, it was falsely related on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās that there is no repentance for anyone who intentionally kills, and this is a further false claim about the Companions. For none of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) ever related that the Prophet (pbuh) either said that he does not intercede for major

sinners or that he said that they [major sinners] will abide eternally in Hellfire. However, it was recorded that Ibn ʿAbbās, in one of his two narrations said: "There is no repentance for anyone who intentionally kills [a Muslim]." A similar error was related on the authority of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. However, the debate over repentance is different from the debate over eternal punishment in Hell. For killing involves a human right; that is why it was debated.

However, the saying, "If part of it [Iman] is lost, then the whole of it is lost," is rejected, and it represents the essence from which many innovations concerning Iman emerged. Moreover, Muʿtazilites and Khārijites argued that if part of Iman is lost, the whole of it is lost as well; and thus, the major sinner will abide forever in Hell. In contrast, the Murjiʾites argued that neither committing a major sin nor abandoning an obligatory deed results in losing Iman. The sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions indicate that part of it is lost while the other part remains, as illustrated in the Prophet's (pbuh) saying: "He [Allah] will remove from Hell whoever has an atom's weight of belief." That is why the Orthodox Muslims said: "Iman exists in varying degrees among different people. It also may increase and diminish." However, some of their followers said: "Iman increases but does not decrease," as related on the authority of Mālik in one of two accounts. Some [namely, ʿAbd Allah Ibn al-Mubārak] said: "Iman exists in varying degrees." But all the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) mentioned both the increase and the decrease of Iman. For example, people related on the authority of Ḥammād Ibn Salamah,[1] on the authority of Abu Jaʿfar, on the authority of his grandfather ʿUmayr Ibn Ḥabīb al-Khaṭmī, one of the Companions of the Messenger (pbuh), that he [the Prophet] said: "Iman increases and diminishes." He was then asked: "How does it increase and diminish?" He replied: "If we hold Allah in remembrance, praise Him, and glorify Him, our Iman increases. But, if we hold Allah little in remembrance, our Iman diminishes. Similarly, Ismāʿīl Ibn ʿAyyāsh relates on the authority of Jarīr Ibn ʿUthmān, on the authority of al-Ḥārith Ibn Muḥammad, on the authority of Abu al-Dardāʾ, who said: "Iman increases and diminishes."

According to Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, who said that Yazīd related, on the authority of Jarīr Ibn ʿUthmān: "Some or of all our scholars heard Abu al-Dardāʾ saying:

[1] Ḥammād Ibn Salamah (?–167 A.H.) was a trustworthy compiler of ḥadith and a grammarian. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 2, p. 302.]

'Indeed, it is a part of a man's growth in knowledge to improve his Iman, make up for any decrease, know whether his Iman increases or diminishes, and know when and where Satan's temptations may come.'" Also, Ismāʿīl Ibn ʿAyyāsh narrated, on the authority of Ṣafwān Ibn ʿAmr, on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn Rabīʿah al-Ḥaḍramī, on the authority of Abu-Hurayrah, who said: "Iman increases and diminishes." Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal related, on the authority of Yazīd Ibn Hārūn, on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn Ṭalḥah, on the authority of Zubayd, on the authority of Dharr,[2] said: "ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb used to say to his companions: 'Let us increase our Iman [they hold Allah in remembrance].'" In the book of *Gharīb al-Ḥadith,* Abu ʿUbayd related the ḥadith of ʿAlī which says: "Iman resembles a white spot on the heart; whenever Iman increases, the white spot increases as well." It was related on the authority of ʿUthmān Ibn ʿAbd Allah and ʿAmr Ibn Hind al-Jumalī that al-Aṣmaʿī said: "A lamẓah, *spot,* is like a speck or something similar."

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal narrated, on the authority of Wakīʿ[3] on the authority of Sharīk,[4] on the authority of Hilāl and on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAkīm, who said: "I heard Ibn Masʿūd saying in his prayer: 'Oh, Allah, increase our Iman, our conviction, and our knowledge [about religion].'" Similarly, Sufyān al-Thawrī narrated, on the authority of Jāmiʿ Ibn Shaddād and al-Aswad Ibn Hilāl, who said: "Muʿādh Ibn Jabal used to tell a man: 'Let us sit down to hold Allah in remembrance [in order to increase our Iman].'" Also, Abu al-Yamān[5] narrated, on the authority of Ṣafwān and Shurayḥ Ibn ʿUbayd,[6] who said that ʿAbd Allah Ibn Rawāḥah used to take the hand of one of his companions and say: "Let us get up in order to increase our Iman for an hour in a posture that holds Allah in remembrance." This increase in Iman was affirmed by the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) after his death and after the revelation of the whole Qur'ān.

[2] Dharr Ibn ʿAbd Allah Abu ʿUmar (?–80) was a transmitter of ḥadith and a Murji'ite sympathizer. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 206.]

[3] Wakīʿ Ibn al-Jarrāḥ Ibn Malīḥ (?–811 A.D.) was an authority on the Qur'ān and a jurist. [*Al-Fihrist,* vol. 2, p. 1121 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 9, page 135.]

[4] Sharīk Ibn ʿAbd Allah Ibn al-Ḥārith al-Nakhʿī (?–177 A H) was a jurist, a judge, and a scholar of ḥadith. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 239 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 206.]

[5] Abu al-Yamān, al-Ḥakim Ibn Nāfiʿ (?–222 A.H.), was a reciter of the Qur'ān and a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 207.]

[6] Shurayḥ Ibn ʿUbayd (?–117 A.H.) was a scholar of Qur'ān and ḥadith in the city of Ḥimṣ, Syria. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 207.]

It was affirmed that ʿAmmār Ibn Yāsir said: "Three characteristics lead anyone who possesses them to have true Iman: to be just to oneself, to spend in spite of poverty, and to offer greetings to everybody [to those you know and to those you do not know]." Al-Bukhārī recorded this in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Also, Jundub Ibn ʿAbd Allah, Ibn ʿUmar, and others said: "We learned Iman, then we learned the Qurʾān, and in turn increased our Iman. Indeed, there are many other sayings narrated on the authority of the Companions and their Successors that support the fact that Iman either increases or diminishes.

[Mālik Ibn Dīnar said that belief in one's heart appears as weak and as frail as a small herb plant.[7] If one cares for it, watering it with useful knowledge and good works, removing the thick underbrush that grows up around it and anything else that might weaken or thwart its growth, then soon it will thrive and increase. First it will grow roots, then branches, then fruits, until at last it rivals the mountains in size, casting shade that extends out to infinity. If, however, one shows no concern for it and neglects it, goats will come and pull it out by the roots, some little boy will carry it off, or the thicket will grow up around it, weakening or perhaps destroying it or depriving it of its moisture. And as this plant is, so also is belief.

Khaythamah Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān said that belief grows fat in times of fertility, and wastes away in times of drought. Its times of fertility are provided by good works, while its times of drought are brought on by sins and acts of disobedience.

One of the pious ancestors was asked: "Is it possible for belief to increase and decrease?" "Yes," he replied, "it can grow until it towers like a mountain, or shrink until it is no larger than a particle of dust."

Ḥudhayfah said in one of his sound traditions: "One might say of a certain man: 'How long-suffering he is!' 'How witty he is!' or, 'How wise and judicious he is!' even though he does not have belief in his heart the size of a grain of mustard

[7] The editor of *Kitab of al-Iman*, MI.2 (Maktab al-Islamī) included a little more than two pages in brackets, which is his custom for material that is not part of the text (pp. 213, 214, and part of 215). He writes that the included material was found in an unpublished manuscript of *Kitab al-Iman*. This material was also included in MI.1 but not in any of the other copies: MZ, MKH, or the rest. The translators have not been able to obtain a copy of the manuscript referred to above in order to verify this portion of the text. The material on these pages is a further discussion about the main theme of this chapter. It is observed that the MZ edition, published in 1993, made no reference to the manuscript under discussion.

seed." In his other sound traditions we read that "the charms and attractions [of the world] are presented to people's hearts as a mat is spread out [over the floor], one reed at a time. Any heart that partakes of them is stained with a black spot, while any heart that spurns them will take on a white spot until there comes to be two types of heart: one as white as a stone, which may never be harmed by temptation as long as the heavens and earth remain, and the other as black as an overcast sky, like an overturned earthen vessel that neither recognizes a good deed nor shuns an evil one except that which follows its own desire." As for the tradition concerning the seventy thousand who enter Paradise without being called to account for [the sufficiency of] their deeds, it provides the most convincing evidence that belief may indeed increase or diminish, since the seventy thousand are described as having powerful, growing belief [that may be seen] through those qualities and attributes that make their belief manifest, and through their dependence on Allah in all of their affairs.

Abu Naʿīm related, based on the account of al-Layth Ibn Saʿd, on the authority of Zayd Ibn ʿUbayd Allah al-Yaznī, on the authority of Abu Rāfiʿ, who said that a man related to him asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) about belief. In response he said: "Do you want me to tell you what pure, unadulterated belief is?" "Yes," the man replied. "To have such belief means that if you offend or wrong anyone, be it your male or female slave or anyone else, you feel grief and regret; or if you give charity and do good, you feel joy and satisfaction." A similar tradition is related by others on the authority of Yazīd, on the authority of those who heard the Prophet (pbuh), when someone asked him about whether belief in one's heart may increase or diminish, in reply to which the Prophet gave the response mentioned above. In addition, al-Bazzār said that it was related to us by Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī, on the authority of Hāniʾ Ibn al-Mutawakkil, on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn Sulaymān, on the authority of Isḥāq, on the authority of Anas from the Prophet, who said: "There are three things that, if found within a person, cause him to merit reward and bring his belief to perfection: a temperament that enables him to live [peaceably] among people, piety that shields him from danger of disobedience to Allah, and a patient, forbearing spirit by which to ward off the ignorance of the ignorant. And there are four things that cause misery to those in whom they are found: a rigid outlook, hardness of the heart, excessive ambition, and greed for the things of this world." The first group of attributes indicates the

increase and strength of one's belief, while those in the second group are evidence of its weakness and diminution.

Abu Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī said that it was related to him by ʿAbd Allah al-Qawārīrī and Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd, on the authority of Yazīd Ibn Zurayʿ and Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd, who said that it was related to them by ʿAwf that he heard from ʿUqbah Ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Maznī that Yazīd said in his ḥadith at the mosque in Baṣrah: "I was told by a man [whose name ʿAwf had forgotten] that he was in Madīnah in a mosque with ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and ʿUmar said to one of those who were seated with him: 'What have you heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) say about Islam?' The man replied: 'I heard him say that Islam began as a single tree trunk; then it was doubled, and then quadrupled. After this it grew to six times and finally flourished.' Then ʿUmar said to the man: 'And what can happen after flourishing but that it should diminish?'" This is how it was related by Abu Yaʿlā in *Musnad ʿUmar,* although in the *Musnad* of this obscure Companion of the Prophet its mention is more appropriate.

Abu Sulaymān said that whoever does someone a good turn by night shall be rewarded by day, and whoever does someone a good turn by day shall be rewarded by night.

The increase of Iman is explicitly cited in many verses of the Qurʾān. For example, Allah says: "For believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His Signs rehearsed, find their belief strengthened . . ." (8:2). Thus, if one feels a tremor in his heart when he hears the Signs of Allah rehearsed [not only when the Signs are revealed], his Iman increases. Indeed, a believer experiences this. When he hears the Signs of Allah rehearsed, his understanding of the meanings of the Qurʾān becomes much clearer, his tendency to do good and his fear of committing evil is strengthened, and his knowledge of Allah and his desire to obey Him becomes stronger. Hence, his Iman increases. Similarly, Allah says: " Those [believers] to whom the people [hypocrites] said: 'A great army is gathering against you: and frightened them: but it [only] increased their belief:' They said: 'For us Allah suffices, and He is the best Disposer of affairs'" (3:173). This increase in belief was due to their saying: "For us Allah suffices, and He is the best Disposer of affairs," when they were frightened by their enemy [not when the verse was revealed]. Allah also says:

"Whenever there comes down a Sūrah [a chapter from the Qur'ān], some of them say: 'Which of you has had his belief increased by it?' Yes, those who believe, their belief is increased, and they do rejoice. But those in whose hearts is a disease, it will add doubt to their doubt . . ." (9:124–25). This increase is not attributed to their affirmation that this Sūrah was revealed by Allah, but is due to their better understanding and practice of the meanings of the Qur'ān. Thus, if it is a command to resort to jihād, their desire [to do this] becomes stronger, and if it is a prohibition from doing an evil, their hatred for doing it becomes stronger. For this reason, Allah says: "And they do rejoice." Here, the word "rejoice" is not mere affirmation. Allah also says: "Those to whom We have given the Book rejoice at what has been revealed unto you: but there are among the clans those who reject a part thereof . . ." (13:36). Here, rejoicing is a response to the increase of Iman. Allah says: "Stay in the Bounty of Allah. And in His Mercy, in that let them rejoice . . ." (10:58); and ". . . On that Day shall the believers rejoice. With the help of Allah . . ." (30:4–5). Allah also says: "And We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire; and We have fixed their number only as a trial for unbelievers, in order that the people of the Book may arrive at certainty, and the believers may increase in belief . . ." (74:31); and "It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers, that they may add belief to their belief . . ." (48:4). This verse was revealed when the Prophet (pbuh) came back with his Companions from the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. Allah makes tranquility a condition for the increase of Iman. The word "tranquility" refers to peace of mind but not to the knowledge and certainty of the heart. Supporting this is His saying on the day of Ḥunayn. Allah says: "But Allah did pour His calm on his Messenger and on the believers, and sent down forces [angels] which you saw not . . ." (9:26); and ". . . They two were in the Cave, and he said to his companion: 'Have no fear, for Allah is with us.' Then Allah sent down His peace upon him, and strengthened him with forces [angels] which you saw not . . ." (9:40). Indeed, on the day of Ḥunayn and on the day of the Cave, none of the verses of the Qur'ān were revealed. But, Allah sends down His tranquility and peace into the hearts of the believers. Therefore, they came back from Ḥudaybiyyah in order to increase their Iman. This indicates that the increased Iman is a state of the heart and an attribute of it, and a work akin to its tranquility, calmness, and conviction. Conviction may be achieved through work and tranquility as well as through knowledge. Similarly, doubt may be in the realm of knowledge as well as in the realm of the heart's tranquility. That is why

the traditional prayer says: "Oh, Allah, we kindly ask you to send down of Your fear [into our hearts] that which prevents us [like a barrier] from disbelieving You of Your obedience [into our hearts] that which brings us closer and closer to Your Paradise, and of certainty that which enables us to endure with ease the world's calamities."

And in the ḥadith of [Abu Bakr] al-Ṣiddīq, narrated by Aḥmad, al-Tirmi<u>dh</u>ī, and others from the Prophet (pbuh), he said: "Ask Allah for good health and certainty. Besides certainty one can be given nothing better than good health. Therefore, ask Allah for them." Hence, certainty in times of calamity and holding firmly to the belief that calamities happen with Allah's knowledge and permission, produces tranquility and peace in the heart, and reliance on Allah. This is the most perfect Iman in Allah's predestination of both good and evil, as illustrated in Allah's saying: "No kind of calamity can occur, except with the permission of Allah: and if anyone believes in Allah, He [Allah] guides his heart the right way . . ." (64:11). ʿUlqamah said: "Ibn Masʿūd narrated: 'He is a man who when a calamity befalls him, knows that it happens with Allah's knowledge and permission, feels content, and accepts it.'" Allah's saying: "Allah guides his heart the right way," refers to the increase of his Iman, as illustrated in the following saying of Allah. Allah says: "But to those who receive Guidance, He increases the [light of] Guidance . . ." (47:17). Allah also says: ". . . They were youths who believed in their Lord, and We advanced them in Guidance" (18:13).

The term "belief," of all the terms mentioned in the Qurʾān, is the one most frequently used in a muqayyad, *conditioned,* sense. When used in this manner, it does not include everything that Allah commands. However, when Iman is used in an absolute sense it encompasses [all] of those attributes or actions that are necessarily associated with it and the perfection of all that has been commanded. Allah says: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend of that whereof He has made you trustees. And such of you as believe and spend, theirs will be a great reward. And what is wrong with you is that you believe not in Allah! While the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord has indeed taken your covenant, if you are real believers. It is He Who sends down His Manifest Verses to His Slave [Muḥammad] that He may bring you out from darkness to light . . ." (57:7–9). Toward the end of the same chapter He also says: "Oh, you who believe! Fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger [Muḥammad], He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give you Light by which you shall walk

[straight], and He will forgive you. And Allah is All Forgiving, Most Merciful" (57:28). Some Qur'ānic interpreters explain the first verse as being addressed to the Quraysh tribe, and the second verse as being addressed to the Jews and Christians. However, this cannot be the case, for Allah never addresses unbelievers as: "Oh, you who believe." After this Allah says: "So that the people of the Scriptures [Jews and Christians] may know that they have no power whatsoever over the Grace of Allah . . ." (57:29). It is agreed that this chapter of the Qur'ān is among those revealed during the time when the Prophet was in Madīnah; hence, it was not used to address the polytheists in Makkah. Allah says, "And what is the matter with you that you believe not in Allah! While the Messenger [Muḥammad] invites you to believe in your Lord, and He has indeed taken your covenant, if you are real believers" (57:8). It is clear that this verse is not addressed to an unbeliever. Moreover, no covenant had been made with the unbelievers in Makkah, but rather with the believers who pledged their allegiance to the Prophet. All the Muslims who emigrated [to Madīnah] acknowledged the Prophet (pbuh) as their leader, as did his Supporters on the night of al-ʿAqabah. However, the Prophet simply called them to realize and perfect their belief by performing those actions required of them both outwardly and inwardly, just as we ask Allah in every prayer we pray to guide us along the Straight Path. And although Allah guides believers to acknowledge [the truth of] the Prophet's message as a whole, the detailed guidance in all that they say and do has not yet been realized. However, all this specific, detailed guidance is now a part of the belief that believers are commanded to have, and through it Allah brings them out of darkness into light.

Chapter Eighteen

Aspects of Increasing Iman

Increasing the Iman which Allah commands us to have, and which is a trait of His believing worshipers, can be achieved through different means. The first aspect in increasing Iman is through practicing ijmāl, *total,* observance and tafṣīl, *detailed,* observance of Allah's commands, for it is the obligation of all mankind to believe in Allah and His Messenger, and of every community to commit itself to all that the Messenger (pbuh) has ordered. It is well known that what was obligatory at first differs from what was required after the revelation of the whole Qur'ān. Hence, unlike one who does not know about Islam, he who knows the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and their meanings is obliged to have a detailed Iman. That is, if a man, inwardly as well as outwardly, believed in Allah and the Messenger (pbuh) and died before he knew the laws of religion, he would die as a believer. His obligation and what he did are different from the Iman of the one who knew the Islamic laws and who believed in them and worked to fulfill them. The Iman of such a person is more complete, in accordance with the obligatory and the actual deeds. Indeed, of what he performed in accordance with the obligation is of a more complete Iman and what he did is also considered more complete.

Allah says: ". . . This day I have perfected your religion for you . . ." (5:3). In this verse, the word "religion" refers to the legislation of commanded and forbidden actions, but does not mean that everybody is obliged to do what the whole community is ordered to do. It is recorded both in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that the Prophet (pbuh) described women as diminished in intellect and religion. This diminution in intellect made the witness of two women equal to that of one man; the diminution in her religion is due to the fact that she does not pray and fast when she is menstruating. Indeed, this diminution is not a diminution of what she is commanded to do and so she will not be punished

because of it. However, if someone is commanded to pray and fast and does so, his religion is complete compared to the one of diminished religion.

The second aspect [of increasing one's Iman] is the total and detailed acts of people. To illustrate this, let us compare the Iman of the following three men. The first absolutely believed in what the Messenger (pbuh) came with and asked for, but was neither concerned about what the Messenger (pbuh) commanded and prohibited nor sought the required knowledge of religion so as to act accordingly. The second sought and obtained this knowledge and acted on it. The third man acquired knowledge, became well acquainted with it, and believed in it but did not act accordingly. These three men shared the same obligation, but the one who looked for detailed knowledge and acted on it had a more complete Iman than the one who knew and believed but did not practice his knowledge. Likewise, he who believed in the message, confessed his sins, and feared punishment was a better believer than the one who did not seek to understand what he was asked to do, and did not fear punishment; on the contrary, he later was negligent and careless, although [overtly as well as covertly] he believed in Muḥammad (pbuh) as the Messenger of Allah.

Accordingly, the more the heart knows, believes in, and practices [what Allah and His Messenger have ordered], the more a person's Iman increases even if that person has a general adherence and general verbal confession.

Similarly, if someone knows Allah's Names as well as their meanings and believes in them, his Iman is more perfect than that of someone who does not know but believes in them generally, or someone who knows only some of them. Hence, the more one knows Allah's Names, Attributes, and Verses, the more perfect his Iman.

The third aspect is that knowledge and assent are differentiated among people. That is, some people have stronger, more enduring Iman and assent than others whose Iman is subject to doubt. Indeed, this is something experienced by each one of us. For example, people differ in the way they see the new moon, hear the same sound, smell the same smell, and taste the same food. So it is with the heart's knowledge and assent. People differ widely in their belief in the meanings of Allah's Names and His Words.

The fourth aspect is that the assent which requires the work of the heart is more complete than that which does not. So, knowledge which is accompanied by works is better than that which is not. Suppose that two men knew that Allah, the Messenger (pbuh), Paradise, and Hell are true. The knowledge of the first man obliged him to love and fear Allah, wish for Paradise, and avoid Hell. However, the knowledge of the second man did not lead him to do so. Thus, we can say that the knowledge of the first is more complete than that of the second. For the strength of the result signals the strength of the cause, and all these matters stem from knowledge. So knowledge of the "beloved" requires one to seek him; and knowledge of the "frightened" requires one to flee from him. However, absence of the required results signals the weakness of the cause or prerequisite. That is why the Prophet (pbuh) said: "One who is informed [indirectly] of something is not like the one who sees it for himself." To illustrate this, when Allah told Moses that his community worshiped the calf, he did not throw the al-Alwāḥ, *Tablets;* but when he himself saw them practicing that, he did. This is not because Moses doubted Allah's words but because the man who is told something, although he does not report the news of the teller, does not perceive the situation in the same way he does if he sees it for himself. Since his mind is occupied with something else, other than what the informer said, he still believes him. Certainly seeing something will give one a clearer understanding of the situation and this assent is better than the other.

The fifth aspect is that works of the heart, such as love for Allah and His Messenger and fear and expectations from Allah, are part of Iman, as proven by the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the pious ancestors. And people differ widely in their performance of these works.

The sixth aspect is that overt works, as well as covert works, are part of Iman; and people also vary widely with respect to these works.

The seventh aspect is the importance of holding Allah in remembrance and not being inattentive, since the latter opposes perfection of knowledge and acceptance. ʿUmar Ibn Ḥabīb, one of the Companions, said: "If we thank and praise Allah, our Iman increases. However, if we neglect and forget Him, our Iman decreases." And Muʿādh Ibn Jabal used to say to his companions: "Let us sit still for an hour so as to strengthen our belief." Allah says: ". . . Nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his own desires . . ."

(18:28); and "And remind for indeed, reminding profits the believers" (51:55); and "The admonition will be received by those who fear [Allah]: But it will be avoided by those most unfortunate ones" (87:10–11). Hence, it is evident that the more a man remembers what he already knows, and practices his knowledge, he will come to understand something he has never known, such as Allah's Names and Verses. This is supported by the following tradition: "Whoever practices what he knows, Allah will provide him with understanding of what he did not know." This is a matter that every believer will realize by himself.

It was recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ [al-Bukhārī]* that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The one who holds Allah in remembrance as compared to one who does not, is like a living man as compared to one who has died." Allah says: ". . . And when they hear His Verses rehearsed, find their belief strengthened . . ." (8:2). That is, hearing of Allah's Verses increases their knowledge with what they did not know, it encourages their practice of the new knowledge, and it reminds them of things they have forgotten. Allah says: "Soon will We show them Our Signs in the [furthest] regions [of the earth], and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this [the Qur'ān] is the Truth . . ." (41:53). That is, the Qur'ān is the truth. Allah also says: ". . . Is it not enough that your Lord does witness all things?" (41:53). So in the Qur'ān Allah is witness to what He reported. Consequently, believers believed in this and then He showed them His Signs in the furthest regions of the earth and in themselves, all of which confirms what the Qur'ān says. Therefore, these Signs indicate that the Qur'ān is the Truth.

Allah says: "Do they not look at the sky above them? How We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it? And the earth, We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm, and produced therein every kind of beautiful growth [in pairs] to be observed and commemorated by every devotee turning [to Allah]" (50:6–8). So the created signs should be observed and commemorated in order to prevent one from blindness and inattention. To illustrate, a man recites a Sūrah (e.g., al-Fātiḥah) many times; and each time he recites it, he gains new knowledge, which in turn increases his acceptance and Iman as if the Sūrah was revealed at that moment. Thus, he believes in these meanings and his knowledge and work increases. This is to be realized by everyone who reads the Qur'ān attentively, in contrast with the one who reads it absentmindedly. Thus, whenever one does what he is commanded to do, he becomes aware of these commands and,

as a result, he affirms his belief. Consequently, at that moment his affirmation in his heart establishes what he was unaware of even when he is truthful.

The eighth aspect is that man may deny or disbelieve things, for he does not know that the Messenger (pbuh) has spoken and ordered them. And if one knew that, he would neither deny nor disbelieve. For his heart strongly affirms that he [the Prophet] told and commanded only the truth. It may happen that when one hears a verse or a ḥadith or thinks about it or someone interprets its meaning for him or it becomes clear to him what is forbidden, then he will enter a state of new affirmation and new belief. This increases his Iman since before this stage he is not considered as an unbeliever but simply as ignorant. This happens in the case of many believers who ignorantly think that an affirmation or a deed is not required for Iman but when they know the truth, they believe. Many people, including those who are conscious about religious matters, may have, in their hearts, many detailed matters that may contradict what the Messenger brought forward. Yet, they do not know that they are contradictory matters and, when they become aware of this, they reverse their opinions. Thus, anyone who introduces an innovation or a saying [to the religion of Islam] or performs a wrong act, and he is a believer in the Messenger or is aware of what the Messenger said and believes in them and does not reverse his beliefs, he is considered ignorant but not an unbeliever. It follows then that every innovator with good intentions of following what the Messenger brought forward is of this category. Thus, he who has knowledge of what the Messenger brought forward and acts accordingly, is better than he who commits an error concerning this, and anyone who becomes aware of the truth after realizing his own error and acts on it, he will be in a more preferable position than before.

Chapter Nineteen

Iman and Islam and the Difference Between Them

The Qur'ān affirms that there is a kind of Islam without Iman. Allah says: "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith, but you [only] say.' 'We have submitted our wills to Allah, for not yet has faith entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not decrease anything in reward of your deeds...'" (49:14). Further evidence comes from accounts recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that affirm that Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ said: "The Prophet gave [gifts] to some but not to the whole group present at that time. Among those who were not given anything was one whom Saʿd thought was the best believer. Therefore, he [Saʿd] asked in astonishment: 'Oh, Messenger of Allah, why do you not give something to that man whom I think is a [true] believer?' Upon this, the Prophet (pbuh) remarked: 'Or a Muslim.' Saʿd repeated his question three times, and every time the Prophet (pbuh) remarked: 'Or a Muslim.' Then, the Prophet (pbuh) added: 'I give to a man, although I love others more than him, fearing that Allah may make him fall on his face in the Hellfire.' In another version of this ḥadith the Prophet struck his hand between my [Saʿd's] neck and shoulder and said: 'Are you asking for a fight, Oh, Saʿd?'"

The question that may arise is: Is this the Islam [of which Allah states that Iman cannot enter the hearts of its people], something for which people are rewarded for, or is it like the Islam of hypocrites? There are two well-known opinions of the pious ancestors and later Muslims. The first is that this is an Islam for which people are rewarded, and that makes them exempt from unbelief and hypocrisy. This was related on the authority of al-Ḥassan [al-Baṣrī], Ibn Sīrīn, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhʿī, and Abu Jaʿfar al-Bāqir. Also, this was the saying of Ḥammād Ibn Zayd,

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Sahl Ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Tustarī, Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī,[1] and many other scholars of the ḥadiths, the Sunnah, and history.

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal said: "It was related to us by Muʾammal Ibn [Isḥāq] on the authority of ʿAmmār Ibn Zayd, who said that I heard Hi<u>sh</u>ām[2] say that al-Ḥassan and Muḥammad used to say that someone was a Muslim, yet be afraid to call him a believer. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal also said that it was related to us by Abu Salamah al-<u>Kh</u>uzāʿī,[3] who said that Mālik said that according to <u>Sh</u>arīk, Abu Bakr Ibn ʿAyyā<u>sh</u>,[4] ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn Abī Salamah, Ḥammād Ibn Salamah, and Ḥammād Ibn Zayd said that Iman is al-maʿrifah, *knowledge,* al-iqrār, *affirmation,* and al-ʿamal, *work.* However, Ḥammād Ibn Zayd made a distinction between Islam and belief, considering belief to be more specific and Islam to be more general.[5]

The second opinion is that this Islam is only a surrender that protects one from the fear of being captured and killed. Hence, it is like the Islam of the hypocrites. Such Muslims are considered unbelievers. For Iman did not enter their hearts, and he in whose heart Iman does not enter is considered an unbeliever. This opinion was the preference of al-Bu<u>kh</u>arī and Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī. The pious ancestors had different views concerning this matter.

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr said that it was related to us by Isḥāq that Jarīr[6] had informed him on the authority of Mu<u>gh</u>īrah,[7] who said that he came to Ibrāhīm al-Na<u>kh</u>ʿī and told him that a man by the name of Saʿīd al-ʿAnbarī had disputed with him. Ibrāhīm replied that this man was not an al-ʿAnbarī, but rather an al-Zabīdī.

1 Abu Ṭālib, Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī al-Makkī (?–386 A.H.), was a scholar of ḥadith, a mystic, and head of Sāliymiyyah Ma<u>dh</u>ab in Baṣrah. His major work is entitled *Qūt al-Qulūb.* [*EI* 2, vol. 1, p. 153 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 216.]

2 Hi<u>sh</u>ām Abu ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ḥassān al-Firdawsī (?–148 A.H.) was a reciter of the Qurʾān and a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 9, p. 81 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 217.]

3 Al-<u>Kh</u>uzāʿī, Abu Salamah Manṣūr (?–201 A.H.), was a famous compiler of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 217.]

4 Abu Bakr Ibn ʿAyyā<u>sh</u> (?–193 A.H.) was a commentator and reciter of the Qurʾān and one of the leading scholars of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 217.]

5 In the MI.2 edition of *Kitab al-Iman* the editor, in a footnote on p. 226, quotes on the margin from the Indian version that: "He considers Islam to be more specific, and belief to be more general," which is the reverse of the position stated above.

6 Jarīr Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (?–188 A.H.) was a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith from Kūfah. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 2, p. 111 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 218.]

7 Mu<u>gh</u>īrah Abu Hā<u>sh</u>im Ibn Maqsam al-Ḍabbī (?–133 A.H.) was a distinguished jurist and a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 218.]

The man who disputed with him claimed that the verse in which Allah says: "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith; but you [only] say; We have submitted our wills to Allah . . .'" (49:14) refers to istislām, *surrender*. To this Ibrāhīm replied no, it refers to Islam.

He [Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr] also said that it was related to us by Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā,[8] on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf, [9] on the authority of Sufyān, on the authority of Mujāhid, that in the verse quoted above, "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You believed not but you only say; we have surrendered into Islam . . .'" (49:14), the desert Arabs had capitulated to the Prophet's message out of fear of being taken captive or being killed. However, the chain of transmission of this ḥadith is incomplete, since Sufyān did not take his account directly from Mujāhid. Some have claimed that the Islam professed by those mentioned in this verse is like that professed by hypocrites, and that for this reason they will not be rewarded for it. This is because Allah denies that they have belief, and whoever has belief denied to him is an unbeliever. Those who hold this position maintain that Islam is belief and as such every Muslim is a believer, and every believer is a Muslim. And whoever who considers major sinners to be Muslims but not believers must hold that they are not included in the verses that read: "All you who believe! When you intend to offer prayer . . ." (5:6); and "All you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the prayer on the day of Friday . . ." (62:9), and such verses. For those mentioned here are described as believers but not as Muslims; hence, whoever is not a believer is not included in such passages.

To refute the second opinion, one may say that the pious ancestors, who said that hypocrites who go out of Iman into Islam, did not say that they had no belief at all. Indeed, this is what the Khārijites and the Muʿtazilites claimed. Orthodox Muslims said that sinners came out of Hell via intercession because they had some Iman, which made it possible to exit the Hellfire. However, they are not called believers. For absolute Iman is that whose possessor deserves reward and enters Paradise, and those sinners did not. However, they are included among those addressed with the words "you who believe." Such a call is addressed to those who

[8] Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Dhuhlī (?–258 A.H.) was considered the Imām of ḥadith in Khurāsān and he collected the ḥadiths of al-Zuhrī in a book entitled *al-Zuriyyāt*. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 218 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 8, p. 3.]

[9] Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf Ibn ʿAbd Allah (n.d.) was a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 218.]

believe, even if their belief is not perfect. Indeed, they are called in order to perfect their Iman. And if so, then how could they have perfected their Iman before the call? Indeed, being addressed as "you who believe" differs from the statement "the true believers are . . . ," as in Allah's saying: "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their lives . . ." (49:15) and the like. Accordingly, the call to "you who believe" includes hypocrites who outwardly profess Iman. And if so, then how could one who is not a hypocrite fail to be included in this address, even though he is not considered truly from among the believers? Indeed, Orthodox Muslims agree on the fact that whoever is not a true believer is called a Muslim. Such a Muslim has Iman that prevents him from abiding in Hell forever. This is agreed upon by Orthodox Muslims; however, would such a person still be called by the name of Iman? This question is what they really disputed. Some said he is called a Muslim and not a "believer" and some said that he is a "believer."

The reality is that such a person is a believer with diminished Iman. He is a believer because of his Iman, but he is sinful because he committed a grave sin; thus he will not be granted absolute Iman. However, the Book and the Sunnah deny that he possesses absolute Iman. Such a person will be included in the Iman that Allah and His Messenger commanded, and it [Iman] is required of him as it is with others. The discussion here is focused on the absolute Iman that is necessary for such a person and others. There are three groups of people who are addressed as believers: the true believers, the hypocrites who overtly pretend to be believers (and who will go to Hell in the Hereafter), and those who have converted to Islam although the essence of Iman has not yet entered their hearts [either because they are new converts to Islam or because they have not comprehended the core or the essence of belief in their hearts]. Instead, they have achieved part of Islam and Iman, for which they will be rewarded. Or, they might have neglected their obligations, because of which they will be punished even though they have not committed major sins. Such people are like the desert Arabs mentioned in the previous verse. They are alike in that they said: "we believe" but they did not practice any of what they were commanded, either inwardly or outwardly. Moreover, the essence of Iman had not entered their hearts, nor did they struggle in the way of Allah. However, they do have some degree of both belief and Islam, for which they deserved to be rewarded. At the same time, they

may have been remiss in performing some of their religious obligations, and although they committed no major sins for which they deserved punishment, they were subject to potential punishment for neglecting to observe religious duties. Such people resembled the desert Arabs mentioned in the verse above since like them they stated that they had believed, although they had not done what they were commanded, either inwardly or outwardly. Thus, neither had the essence of belief entered their hearts nor had they strived in the way of Allah even though the Prophet (pbuh) had called upon them to do so. On this account they may be classed among those who have committed major sins for which they are under threat of divine retribution; such as those who pray, give zakah, and strive in the way of Allah, while continuing at the same time to commit major sins. Such individuals are not thereby excluded from Islam; however, a formal dispute may arise concerning them as to whether it can be said that they are believers. If Allah wills, we shall discuss this question in what follows.

As for the Khārijites and the Muʿtazilites, neither considered these types Muslims or believers, since both sects considered Islam and Iman as one thing. Thus if they ceased to have Iman, they did not have Islam, but the Khārijites said that they are unbelievers, and the Muʿtazilites said that they are neither Muslims nor unbelievers; that they are a state in between. They refer to them as manzilah bayna al-manzilatayn, *they are in an in-between state.* The proof that the Islam mentioned in the verse above is the type of Islam that they will be rewarded for and that they are not hypocrites, is the saying of Allah: "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith, but you [only] say.' 'We have submitted our wills to Allah, for not yet has faith entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not decrease anything in reward of your deeds . . .'" (49:14). This indicates that if they obey Allah and His Messenger with this kind of Islam, Allah will reward them for their obedience. However, the work of the hypocrite in the Hereafter will be futile.

Moreover, they have been described as having attributes that differ from those of the hypocrites. For the hypocrites are described as having unbelief in their hearts, and as concealing within themselves the opposite of what they manifest outwardly. Allah says: "And there are some people who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' while in fact they believe not. They [think to] deceive Allah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive [it] not. In their hearts is a disease [of doubt and hypocrisy] and Allah has increased their disease

. . ." (2:8–10); and "When the hypocrites come to you [Oh, Muḥammad], they say: 'We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah.' Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars indeed" (63:1). Hence, the hypocrites are described in the Qur'ān as being liars who utter with their mouths what is not in their hearts, and that in their hearts they carry unbelief for which they deserve divine retribution. However, these individuals [i.e., the desert Arabs mentioned in the verse quoted above] have not been described in this way whatsoever; but when they claimed to have belief, Allah said to the Messenger: ". . . Say: 'You have no belief, but you [only] say.' 'We have submitted our wills to [Islam], for not yet has Iman entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not decrease anything in reward of your deeds . . .'" (49:14).

Denying that someone does not have absolute, complete belief does not require that he be considered a hypocrite. This may be seen in the following verses. Allah says: "They ask you [Oh, Muḥammad] about the spoils of war. Say: 'The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger.' So fear Allah and adjust all matters of difference among you, and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers" (8:1); and "The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts and when His Verses are recited unto them, they increase in their belief; and they put their trust in their Lord. Those who offer prayers and spend out of what We have provided for them, it is they who are the believers in truth . . ." (8:2–4). But of course, one's not being a true believer in the sense described here does not mean that he is a hypocrite who will be regulated to the lowest reaches of Hell. Rather, it simply means that he has not achieved the required belief such that he may not be said to be a true believer, just as one might not be able to apply other names to someone due to his having neglected some duties pertaining to such a designation. Similarly, the desert Arabs described above were said not to have the required belief even though they were Muslims; nevertheless, they do possess enough belief to merit some reward.

This is the case of most of the converts to Islam as well as of those who do not know the facts of Iman. An example of the latter is a man who has converted to Islam as a result of fighting or being captured by Muslims. Such a man becomes Muslim and overtly obeys Allah and His Messenger. However, covertly, knowledge about the facts of Iman has not entered his heart. Such knowledge can be achieved through understanding of the Qur'ān, through accompanying the

people of Iman and imitating their sayings and works, or through special guidance from Allah. Sometimes, one may see a part of the merits of Islam and of the disadvantages of unbelief that may discourage him to become Muslim. And if he was born into a Muslim community and grew up among Muslims, then he will love Islam, seeing some of its benefits as well as the vices of unbelievers. Many such Muslims may become skeptical when they hear ideas that cast doubt on Islam. Also, they may not strive for the sake of Allah. Hence, they are not included in the following verse. Allah says: "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their lives in the Cause of Allah . . ." (49:15). Moreover, they are not hypocrites who conceal their unbelief inwardly. Rather, they have imperfect Iman so they are not true believers, nor are they hypocrites. Also, they are not of those who committed major sins but rather performed obedience outwardly. Yet they do not perform the essence of Iman that leads to true belief. Thus, they have some Iman with them but they are not true believers. Accordingly, they will be rewarded for what they have performed of obedience and for this reason Allah says: ". . . But you [only] say: 'We have submitted our wills to Allah . . .'" (49:14). Allah also says: "They impress on you as a favor that they have embraced Islam. Say: 'Count not your Islam as favor upon Me; no, Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the belief, if you indeed are true'" (49:17). That is, if you are true and sincere in your saying "we believe," Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to Iman. This requires that they may be true and sincere in their saying "we believe." And their sincerity either means characterizing them by being, as Allah describes, that they believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their wealth and their lives in the Cause of Allah, those are the sincere ones; or it means that they are not like hypocrites because they have Iman [although it is not absolute]. The latter interpretation seems closer to the meaning of the verse than the former. Allah knows best how to interpret its meaning, for He says concerning the tested women: ". . . Then if you know them for true believers, send them not back to the disbelievers . . ." (60:10). But one cannot deny that they might doubt in the future. Allah disbelieves only the hypocrites and no one else. As for these, He does not consider them to be lying, but rather says: "You have not believed." Also the Prophet (pbuh) said: "None of you is a believer until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself." Likewise he says: "The fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits it;" and "No one is a

believer whose neighbor is not secure from his harmful conduct." But in none of these statements are hypocrites being described or referred to.

The context of the verse cited above indicates that Allah finds fault with them. The reason is that in their ignorance and hardheartedness, they looked upon themselves as having done Allah a favor by becoming Muslims, thereby showing outwardly what was in their hearts, of which Allah was already aware. As Allah says to the Prophet concerning them: "Say: 'Will you instruct Allah about your religion while Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth? . . .'" (49:16). If there had been no religion whatsoever in their hearts, then they would have had nothing to tell Allah about their religion; for anyone can recognize that kind of Islam which is manifested outwardly. The preposition bi, *about,* is used along with the verb in this verse, since the statement implies the sense of the verbs "inform" or "speak to," as if Allah had been asking them: "Do you intend to inform Allah or speak to Him of your religion, when He is the One who knows everything in heaven and on earth?" The context of the verse indicates that those things of which they informed Allah were the same things that had been mentioned by Allah concerning them, namely, their saying: "we have believed." Hence, what they were "informing" Allah about was what was in their hearts.

Qur'ānic interpreters reported that when these verses were revealed, the desert Arabs came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) swearing that they were true and sincere believers, so Allah revealed His saying: "Say: What! Will you instruct Allah about your religion? . . ." (49:16). This indicates that they were true and sincere in their conversion to Islam because after the revelation of this verse, they were not ordered to strive. But it was only something they said; and He Himself says: ". . . For not yet has faith entered your hearts . . ." (49:14). The word lamā, *yet,* is a negation of an event that is about to happen and that is likely to occur. As Allah says: "Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah tests those of you who fought [in His Cause]? . . ." (3:142). Al-Suddī stated that this verse was revealed in connection with the desert Arabs of [the tribes of] Muzaynah, Juhaynah, Aslam, Ashjaʿ, and Ghufār. These are the ones whom Allah mentions in Sūrat al-Fatḥ, and who used to say "we believe in Allah" in order to protect themselves; however, when they were called out to fight at the battle of Ḥudaybiyyah, they stayed behind. This verse was then revealed to address the situation.

It has been related on the authority of Muqātil that their houses were between Makkah and Madīnah, and that whenever any of the Prophet's (pbuh) troops passed by, they would say "we believe" in order to ensure the safety of their lives and property. Then when the Prophet (pbuh) marched to Ḥudaybiyyah and called upon them to come out and fight, they did not do so.

According to Mujāhid, this verse [about the desert Arabs] was revealed concerning the Bedouin tribe of Banū Asad Ibn Khuzaymah. Someone else described their condition, saying that they came to Madīnah in a year of drought. When they arrived, they showed themselves to be Muslims outwardly although they were not believers. They polluted the city streets with human excrement, then raised their prices and began to act as though they had done the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) a favor by becoming Muslims, saying: "We have brought you heavy loads [of goods] and slaves." Subsequently this verse was revealed concerning them. Commenting on the words of this verse of which Allah says: "They regard as favor upon you [Oh, Muḥammad] that they have embraced Islam. Say: 'Count not your Islam as a favor upon me. Nay, but Allah has conferred favor upon you, that He has guided you to the belief, if you indeed are true" (49:17). Qatādah said that this verse refers to when they came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said to him: "We became Muslims without putting up armed resistance. We did not fight against you as did this tribe or that tribe." In response to this Allah says to His Prophet: "They regard as favor upon you [Oh, Muḥammad] that they have embraced Islam. Say: 'Count not your Islam as a favor upon me. Nay, but Allah has conferred favor upon you, that He has guided you to the belief . . .'" (49:17).

Muqātil Ibn Ḥayyān agrees that they were members of the Bedouin tribe of Banū Asad Ibn Khuzaymah, who said: "Oh Messenger of Allah, we have come to you without putting up any armed resistance, leaving behind both our families and our wealth whereas all the other Arab tribes fought against you until at last, against their wills, they entered Islam. All of this ought to give us special prerogatives over others." In response to this Allah reveals the verse which reads: "They regard as favor upon you [Oh, Muḥammad] that they have embraced Islam. Say: 'Count not your Islam as favor upon me. Nay, but Allah has conferred favor upon you, that He has guided you to the belief, if you indeed are true" (49:17); and ". . . And render not in vain your deeds" (47:33). And it is said that a major sin that leads one ultimately to Hell is any serious offense that a person commits, then dies without repenting of it.

All the foregoing makes clear that they were not unbelievers inwardly, nor had they entered the complete belief required of believers. They are referred to in Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, where these different types of people were mentioned. Allah says: "Indeed! Those who call you from behind the dwellings, most of them have no sense" (49:4). They are not described here as being either unbelievers or hypocrites, although they have reason to fear that they might become so. For this reason, some of them turned away from Islam because the joy in their hearts was not tempered by belief. After this Allah says: "Oh you who believe! If a fāsiq, *sinner,* comes to you with news, verify it . . ."(49:6). This verse was revealed concerning al-Walīd Ibn ʿUqbah, who had given a false report.

According to Qurʾānic exegetists, this verse was revealed concerning al-Walīd Ibn ʿUqbah, who was dispatched by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) to the tribe of Banū al-Muṣṭalaq to collect the alms they were going to donate. But since pre-Islamic times there had been enmity between them, so after he had gone part of the distance, he came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said: "They refused to give any alms, and even wanted to kill me." As a result, the Prophet (pbuh) prepared an expedition to fight them, after which this verse was revealed. This story has come down in various forms. In the end, however, Allah says: "And know that, among you is the Messenger of Allah. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would surely be in trouble . . ." (49:7). And Allah also says: "And if two parties among believers fall into fighting, then make peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you [all] against the one that rebels till it complies with the Command of Allah; then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily! Allah loves those who are equitable" (49:9). He also forbids them to mock one another or engage in slander, backbiting, or name-calling, saying: ". . . How bad is it, to insult one another after having belief . . ."(49:11). It has been interpreted to mean that no believer should call another a sinner or unbeliever after he has professed belief; however, a better attested interpretation is: "What an evil thing it is to deserve the name fāsiq, *sinner,* once you have believed!" As Allah says concerning the one who gave a false report: ". . . If a fāsiq, *sinner,* comes to you with news, verify it . . ."(49:6), thus he was called a sinner.

In the two collections of sound traditions, we read in an account passed down from the Prophet (pbuh) that he said: "To insult or revile a Muslim is fusūq, *sin,* and to

take up arms against him is kufr, *unbelief.* Hence, if one rails against a Muslim and mocks him, he deserves to be called a fāsiq, *sinner.* Allah says: "... And do not accept their testimony forever, they indeed are the sinners" (24:4). In other words, if those who have professed belief commit acts on account of which they deserve to be called sinners, then they have merited the title after having believed; otherwise, in their mutual name-calling they would not be saying, fāsiq, *sinner,* and kāfir, *unbeliever,* and the like. For when the Prophet (pbuh) arrived in Madīnah, some people were calling each other names such as these.

According to one group of Qur'ānic exegetists, the intent behind this verse is to say: "Once someone has become a Muslim, do not label him according to the sins he committed before becoming a Muslim." For example, if a Jew were to become a Muslim, it would not be right to say to him, "Hey, Jew!" This interpretation was adopted by Ibn ʿAbbās and a group of his followers such as al-Ḥassan, Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr, ʿAṭā' al-Khurāsānī, and Al-Qarẓī.[10] According to ʿIkrimah, the verse refers to someone saying "You unbeliever!" or "You hypocrite!" According to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Zayd, it refers to naming someone based on his actions, as when one says, "You adulterer!" "You thief!" or "You sinner!" And according to an interpretation attributed by al-ʿŪfī to Ibn ʿAbbās, this verse expresses condemnation of the repentant sinner for the evil deeds he committed in the past. Of course, calling someone an unbeliever, a Jew, an adulterer, a thief, or some other name connoting the commission of unacceptable acts is not the same as calling someone a sinner. Hence it is certain that the statement, Allah says: "... How evil is the name sinner? ..."(49:11), does it not refer to calling someone a sinner, since calling him an unbeliever is far worse; rather, it means that the one who calls someone else an insulting name himself becomes a sinner. This is the meaning conveyed by the ḥadith: "Cursing a Muslim is a sin, and fighting him is unbelief." Allah says: "... And those who do not repent are [indeed] wrongdoers" (49:11). He calls them wrongdoers if they do not desist even if they are included under the name "believers." Then, He asks the believers not to speak ill of each other behind their backs and not to despise each other. Allah says: "... The most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most Righteous of you ..." (49:13). Afterward, Allah mentions the saying of the desert Arabs, "we believe."

[10] Al-Qarẓī, Muḥammad Ibn Kaʿb Ibn Salīm (?–117 A.H.), was a jurist and a scholar of ḥadith who transmitted ḥadith from Ibn ʿAbbās, ʿAlī, and Ibn Masʿūd. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 225.]

Hence, this Sūrah prohibits committing sins and disobeying Allah and His Messenger. Indeed, the desert Arabs mentioned in this verse are like hypocrites. However, the people who curse and commit sin, and those who shout out [to the Prophet] from outside the Inner Chambers are not hypocrites. Concerning them interpreters remark: "They are the people who were called to arms in the year of Ḥudaybiyyah. Although they were major sinners [covertly], they were neither hypocrites nor unbelievers."

According to Ibn Isḥāq, when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) wanted to make the minor pilgrimage, the pilgrimage he made to Ḥudaybiyyah, he issued a summons to the Bedouin Arabs around Madīnah to come out and fight with him for fear that his own tribe would come out against him or seek to prevent him from entering Ḥudaybiyyah. However, many of them were slow to respond to his summons; hence, they are the ones to whom Allah was referring when He says: "Those of the Bedouins who lagged behind will say to you: 'Our possessions and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us . . .'" (48:11). In other words, they were saying: "Pray for Allah to forgive us for failing you." As Allah says in another part of this verse: ". . . They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts . . ." (48:11). That is, it matters not to them whether you ask Allah to forgive them or not. This is the condition in which one finds the sinner who is indifferent to the wrongs he has committed. As for the hypocrites, Allah says of them: "And when it is said to them: 'Come, so that the Messenger of Allah may ask forgiveness from Allah for you,' they turn aside their heads, and you would see them turning their faces in pride. It is equal to them whether you [Muḥammad] ask forgiveness or ask not forgiveness for them. Allah will not forgive them . . ." (63:5–6). However, Allah does not say such a thing concerning the desert Arabs mentioned above. Rather, this verse is evidence that they did not speak the truth when they asked the Prophet to pray that Allah would forgive them. Allah says: ". . . You shall be summoned [to fight] against a people given to vehement war; then shall you fight, or they shall submit. Then, if you show obedience, Allah will grant you a goodly reward, but if you turn back as you did before, He will punish you with a grievous penalty'" (48:16). Hence, Allah grants them a fair reward if they obey the one who calls them to fight for the sake of Allah, and He threatens them with a grievous penalty if they disobey.

This call is like that directed to those people resembling them who commit major sins. However, they differ from unbelievers, who do not deserve reward if they

obey unless they first believe in their hearts. And unbelievers are not merely warned against disobedience, since unbelief is worse than disobedience.

This indicates that those [desert Arabs] who lagged behind are considered among the sinners of the community due to abandoning an obligation or committing a sin. Since they abandoned the fighting that Allah commands of them it resulted in their skepticism, which showed that they were not true and sincere believers, although in their hearts they truly embraced the religion of Islam.

Qur'ānic exegetists have said that they were not believers, since Allah denies their having belief, just as He does in the case of the adulterer, the thief, the person who drinks alcoholic beverages, the person whose neighbor does not feel safe from harm on his account, the person who does not desire for his fellow human being the good that he desires for himself, the person who does not defer to the authoritative judgments of Allah and His Messenger, and the like. Evidence in favor of this view may be found in Allah's saying: "... How bad is it, to insult one another after having belief..."(49:11). This is consistent with the ḥadith: "To insult a Muslim is a sin, and to fight against him is unbelief." Hence, Allah condemns those who come to merit the name "sinner" after having professed belief; moreover, whoever is called a sinner is not a believer, which in turn indicates that the desert Arabs mentioned above belong to the category of those who have committed major sins, but not to that of hypocrites.

As for the claim that they became Muslims out of fear of being killed or being taken captive, this applies to those who did not emigrate from Makkah to Madīnah and who were not among the Prophet's supporters in Madīnah, yet who became Muslims out of fear, and hope of gain. The situation of these people was similar to that of the members of the Quraysh tribe, who remained unbelievers until the surrender of Makkah when they were defeated by the Prophet (pbuh), as well as those whose attitudes represented a combination of that of the Qurayshites and the Islam of the inhabitants of Najd and those whose hearts were to be reconciled. However, not every one who becomes a Muslim out of some desire or fear is destined for the lowest reaches of Hell. Rather, such individuals may become genuine, obedient Muslims in whose hearts there is no disbelief of the Messenger of Allah or enmity toward him. However, neither have their hearts been fully illumined with the light or spiritual perception of belief. A member of this group may progress in Islam until he becomes a true believer, as did most of the

Qurayshites, who became Muslims only after the Prophet's conquest of Makkah; on the other hand, he may remain no more than a habitual sinner, or he might be revealed to be a skeptic and a hypocrite when he is questioned after death by the angels Munkar and Nakīr.[11] When asked: "What do you say about the man who was sent among you?" He may reply: "Well, I do not know! I just heard people saying something about him, so I said it also."

We made mention above of those who said that they had become Muslims without putting up any armed resistance and who for this reason claimed to have an Islam superior to other people. However, Allah censures them for claiming to have done someone a favor by becoming Muslims, and reveals about them the verse that reads: ". . . And render not vain your deeds" (47:33), as major sinners have done.

And also Allah says: ". . . But say, We have submitted our wills to Allah, for faith has not yet entered your hearts . . ." (49:14). The word lammā, translated as *not yet,* is a negation of that which is expected and the occurrence of that is anticipated. The same concept is found in the following verses, as Allah says: "Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah tests those of you who fought [in His Cause] and [also] tests those who remain patient?" (3:142); and "Or do you think that you will enter Paradise without such [trials] as came to those who passed away before you? . . ." (2:214). Moreover, Allah says: ". . . Faith has not yet entered your hearts . . ." (49:14). This implies that the entrance of faith into their hearts is expected and anticipated. The one who enters Islam for the first time, Iman did not yet enter his heart but it is expected that this will take place later as in the following ḥadith: "A man embraces Islam for worldly desires at the beginning of the day, and no sooner than the end of the day approaches Islam becomes more beloved to him than anything that the sun shines on." Therefore, most of those who became Muslims out of some fear or earthly desire had belief enter their hearts later on. Allah says: ". . . But, Say: "We have submitted to Islam . . ." (49:14). He commands them to say this, whereas the hypocrite is not commanded to say anything. Allah also says: ". . . But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not decrease anything in reward for your deeds . . ." (49:14). As for the hypocrite, obeying Allah and His Messenger will do him no good unless he first becomes a believer.

[11] Munkar and Nakīr are the names of the two angels who examine the dead in their graves as to their belief.

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal argued that in talking about Iman, but not Islam, one has to say: "I am a believer, if Allah wills." Moreover, Aḥmad also argued that people who commit major sins cease to be believers, although they may be Muslims. Al-Maymūnī[12] said: "I asked Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal about his opinion of the statement: 'I am a believer, if Allah wills.' He said: 'I say I am a believer, if Allah wills.' But I say, I am a Muslim without saying if Allah wills." Upon this, al-Maymūnī asked: "Do you differentiate between Islam and Iman?" Aḥmad replied: "Oh, yes." The inquirer then asked: "What is your evidence?" Upon this, Aḥmad recited the following verse. Allah says: "The desert Arabs Say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You believe not but you only say, we submitted our wills to Allah . . .'" (49:14). He also mentioned other things. Al-Shālinjī[13] said: "I asked Aḥmad about the one who said: 'I am a believer in myself by way of judgments and inherited [practices and traditions] but I am not sure where I am with Allah.'" Aḥmad responded: "He will not be considered a Murjiʾite."

Abu Ayyūb Sulaymān Ibn Dāʾūd al-Hāshimī[14] said: "Making the exception [that is, adding the clause, "if Allah wills"] when speaking of belief is permissible. And if someone says, 'I am truly a believer,' rather than making the exception and adding, 'if Allah judges me to be so,' this is permissible as I see it, and I would not consider such a person to be a Murjiʾite." This view was shared by Abu Khuthaymah and Ibn Abī Shaybah. Moreover, al-Shālinjī mentioned that he once asked Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal about the person who persists in committing grave sins yet without neglecting prayer, giving zakah, and fasting: "Can such a person persist [in being a believer] even if this is his condition?" Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal replied that he could. For according to the ḥadith that "the fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits it," such a person ceases to be a believer though he continues to be a Muslim. Likewise it may be said, as in the ḥadith, "he who drinks wine, at the time he drinks it, is not a believer," and "he who steals, at the time he steals, is not a believer." Allah says: ". . . And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, surely those are grave

[12] Al-Maymūnī, ʿAbd al-Ḥassan ʿAbd al-Malik (?–274 A.H.), was a jurist and a reciter of the Qur'ān who studied with Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal for over twenty years. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 228.]

[13] Al-Shālinjī, Ismāʿīl Ibn Saʿīd (?–246 A.H.), was a jurist and a scholar of ḥadith and wrote a famous book entitled *Faḍāʾil al-Shaykhayn*. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 229.]

[14] Al-Hāshimī, Abu Ayyūb Sulaymān Ibn Dāʾūd (?–219 A.H.), was a scholar of ḥadith and a jurist who lived in Baghdād. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 229.]

sinners" (5:47).[15] So I said to Ibn ʿAbbās: "What kind of unbelief is this which is referred to here?" He replied: "It is unbelief that does not cause one to cease to be a member of the religions community. Rather, just as some people's belief is greater than others, so also does unbelief exist in degrees, unless there results from it something concerning which everyone agrees would exclude him from the community of belief." And according to Ibn Abī Shaybah, the ḥadith that, "the fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits it," indicates that the person referred to here does not have complete belief; rather, some degree of belief is lacking in him.

Al-Shālinjī related that he once asked Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal about belief and Islam. He replied that belief is a saying and a work, while Islam is an iqrār, *verbal confession*. Abu Khuthaymah was in agreement with this view. As for Ibn Abī Shaybah, he held that there can be no Islam without belief, nor belief without Islam. The person who says, "I have accepted belief," has likewise entered Islam; and if he says, "I have accepted Islam," he likewise has entered belief. And according to Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Mirwazī, others also asked Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal about the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "A fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits it." He [Aḥmad] replied: "Whoever commits one of the four major sins [fornication, theft, drinking wine, and plundering] mentioned in the previous ḥadith, is called a Muslim but not a believer, and if he commits a lesser sin rather than a major one, he will be called a believer but of diminished belief.

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal sometimes spoke of this distinction [between the Muslim and the believer], while at other times he would merely make mention of the differences and stop there; this latter position was the view he took later on. Abu Bakr al-Athram[16] said in the *Sunnah* that he heard Abu ʿAbd Allah asking about making al-istithnāʾ, *the exception,* with regard to one's being a believer. He

[15] In this Qurʾānic verse from Sūrat al-Māʾidah (5:47), the last word should be al-fāsiqūn, *the grave sinners.* However, in MI.1 (p. 212), MI.2 (p. 240), MZ (p. 229), and MKH (p. 215) of *Kitab al-Iman* (the versions used for this translation), this verse ends with the word al-kāfirūn, *the unbelievers,* instead. However, in DKI, p. 217, it is correct. In GHA, which is an abridged edition, this whole section is omitted. Not only is the word al-kāfirūn, as used in the verse, wrong, but it renders invalid the argument that follows.

[16] Al-Athram, Abu Bakr Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad (?–261 A.H.), was a jurist and a scholar of ḥadith who wrote a book entitled *al-Sunan fī al-Fiqh.* [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 1, p. 194 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 230.]

[Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] replied: "I do not condemn the practice as this implies that some people do condemn it. For if we believe that Iman is a saying and work that will increase and decrease, then we have to say, "if Allah wills" whenever we talk about one's Iman [i.e., we do not say that because we doubt his Iman but because he may be negligent in his deeds]." Abu ʿAbd Allah [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] said in support of this that Allah says: ". . . You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills . . ." (48:27). This is evidence about exception, without a doubt. Another piece of evidence came from the Prophet (pbuh), who said concerning the people of the graves: "Indeed, if Allah wills, we will follow you [the dead]," and this means that there is no doubt concerning this matter. Thus he [the Prophet] used the exception: "Based on this [the Oneness of Allah] we will be resurrected, if Allah wills," this means from the grave. He [Aḥmad] mentioned the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): " I hope to be the most fearful of Allah among you." He stated all of the above in order to strengthen the case of istithnāʾ, *exception,* with regard to belief.

I said to Abu ʿAbd Allah: "It is as if you see nothing wrong with someone not making the exception." He replied by saying: "If it is someone who believes that belief is both a saying and work, and that belief may increase or diminish, then it is easier for me to grant this." Then he went on to say: "There are people whose hearts are too weak to make the exception, it is like an amazement to them." I also heard someone ask Abu ʿAbd Allah: "What do you say about Shabābah?"[17] He replied: "Shabābah used to claim to be a Murjiʾite, and people have attributed to him views even more odious than such rumors as these, the likes of which I have never heard anyone else espouse. According to Shabābah, if someone said [something], he performed an act with his tongue; therefore, he performed an act with a member of his body. However, this view is offensive, and I never heard of anyone supporting it." Then someone asked Abu ʿAbd Allah whether he had written anything about Shabābah. "Yes," he replied, "I wrote something about him some time ago, before we became aware that he held this view." Then I asked him whether he had written anything about him after this discovery. "No," he answered, "not a word." Someone then said to Abu ʿAbd Allah: "They claim that Sufyān used to go so far as to make the exception when he referred to himself as a believer." "This was based on Sufyān's doctrinal belief," replied Abu ʿAbd

[17] Shabābah, Abu ʿAmr al-Fazārī (?–256 A.H.), was a scholar of ḥadith and a sympathizer to the Murjiʾite's way of thinking. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 226 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 231.]

Allah, "and he has been known to support the practice of making the exception." "But who has reported this on Sufyān's authority?" I asked. "Whoever has passed down any report on Sufyān's authority in this regard has himself practiced making the exception." Wakīʿ reports that Sufyān once said: "We figure people to be believers based on [worldly] judgments and inherited [practices and traditions]; however, we cannot be certain what they are in Allah's judgment." I then asked him: "So what do you yourself say?" "We support the practice of making the exception," he answered.

"So then," I asked Abu ʿAbd Allah: "What if someone says he is a Muslim but does not make the exception?" "That is quite acceptable," he replied. "If one simply says he is a Muslim, he need not make the exception." Then I said to him: "Let us suppose I say that so-and-so is a Muslim, knowing that the Prophet (pbuh) said: 'A Muslim is someone whom other Muslims have no reason to fear lest he harm them by anything he says or does,' yet knowing also that people do, in fact, have reason to fear that he might harm them by what he says or does." In reply, he mentioned the tradition passed down by ʿAbd al-Razzāq, on the authority of Muʿammar, on the authority of al-Zuhrī, according to which Islam is based on kalimah, *utterance (of two testimonies),* whereas belief is based on work performed. Then someone said to Abu ʿAbd Allah: "Shall we say, then, that belief may increase or diminish? "The tradition passed down from the Prophet (pbuh) indicates that this is so," he replied. It says: "Bring out of Hell whoever has [belief] in his heart the size of a speck of so-and-so." Someone then asked him about what ʿĪsā al-Aḥmar said about the Murjiʾite's views. He replied, saying: "Yes, I am aware of what they said, and they are offensive, objectionable views." It was related to us by Mu'ammal, on the authority of Ḥammād Ibn Zayd, who said that he had heard Hishām say that al-Ḥassan [al-Baṣrī] and Muḥammad used to refer to someone as a Muslim, yet hesitated to refer to anyone as a believer.

I said to Abu ʿAbd Allah: "Was this related by anyone other than Suwayyid?" "If so, I am not aware of it," he replied. Then I heard Abu ʿAbd Allah say: "Belief is words that one utters and works that one performs." I then asked what he thought of the Prophetic tradition in which it is said [concerning a certain slave woman]: "Free her; she is a believer." He replied: "Not everyone says that she is a believer; rather, some simply say: 'Free her.'" For example, Mālik heard this view expressed by the elder Hilāl Ibn ʿAlī, whose account does not include the clause,

"she is a believer."[18] However, some have said that the woman mentioned in this tradition was a believer, since when she herself professed to be one, she is thereby reckoned to be a believer. I said to him: "Do you make a distinction between belief and Islam?" "This is a manner over which people have disagreed," he said. "It is claimed that Ḥammād Ibn Zayd drew such a distinction." He was then asked: "Who are the Murji'ites?" He answered: "They are those who say that belief is what one says, but has nothing to do with works." It was said that Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal never wanted to deprive one from all of Iman to the point that nothing remains of it with him, as the Khārijites and Muʿtazilites claimed. Aḥmad stated, in more than one place, that this does not mean that one ceases to be a believer if he commits a major sin, for in another place he remarks that the people who commit major sins have Iman that brings them out of Hell. To support his argument, he quoted the Prophet's (pbuh) saying: "Remove from Hell whoever has an atom's weight of Iman." Hence Aḥmad, as well as the leaders of the Orthodox Muslims, agreed that al-fusāq, *the sinners,* who are not hypocrites have some Iman through which they are rescued from Hell. In this way, one can differentiate between the sinners, unbelievers, and hypocrites. However, it is worth mentioning that the sinners, although they have some Iman, are not classified as true, complete believers worthy of praise and reward. The Legislator [the Prophet] denied the application of the name "believer" to such as these; as he is quoted as saying in the well-known traditions: "A fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits it;" and "None of you is a believer until he desires for his fellow human being the good which he desires for himself"; and "No one is a believer unless his neighbor feels safe from harm on his account." The Prophet swore to the truth of such statements numerous times, when he said: "The believer is someone on whose account people have no reason to fear for their lives or wealth."

As for the Muʿtazilites, they categorically denied that such people [that is, major sinners who are nevertheless not hypocrites] could be described either as believers

[18] [The editor of MI.2 supplied the following footnote on p.243 of that work.] This tradition has been related by Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Kathīr on the authority of Hilāl Ibn ʿAlī, that is, Ibn Abī Maymūnah, who included the statement, "She is a believer," whereas it is excluded by Muslim, Aḥmad and others. The inclusion however, acceptable and accounts where it has been included have been passed down through other sources on the authority of a group of the Companions of the Prophet, whose traditions have been related by al-Dhahabī in the beginning of the book entitled *al-ʿUluw*. Hence, the statement is a reliable addition which one need not hesitate to accept.

or as Muslims. Rather, they said concerning a person belonging to this group that they consider him as having a status somewhere in between. On one hand, it is said that he will remain forever in Hell such that even intercession will not be able to bring him out. This position has been held against them; however, if they only denied that such a person may be referred to as a perfect believer without qualification, yet acknowledged that he had a measure of belief sufficient to bring him out of Hell, they would not be classed as heretics. All adherents of Orthodox Islam are in agreement that such a person no longer has the complete belief he is required to have; he has ceased to have some of the requisite belief he once had. However [he has not ceased to be a Muslim]; rather, he is among those under threat of divine retribution. There are those among the Murjiʾites and the Jahmites who disagreed with this, saying: "belief may not be divided; therefore, he is considered to have complete belief." As for those who denied that he may be described as having perfect belief, they said that the word "believer," used in an absolute manner, is associated with praise and the meriting of reward. Terms used to refer to such a person might include: "a righteous person," "a pious person," "on the straight path," and so on. So if such descriptions may not be applied in an absolute sense to the sinner, then neither may the absolute term "believer" be applied to him. As for the possibility of him being addressed as a believer, this is due to the fact that those addressed as believers include everyone who has even a limited measure of belief. For belief is something that a Muslim is commanded to have, and his [occasional] works of disobedience do not exempt him from this command.

However, what Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] mentioned about Islam followed al-Zuhrī's saying that they see Islam as kalimah, *utterance (of two testimonies),* and Iman as work. In the latter saying, the meaning of Islam bears two interpretations. It may mean verbal confession and its consequences [overt works]. This is the Islam that the Prophet (pbuh) indicated when he said: "Islam implies that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger, and you establish prayer, give zakah, fast during Ramaḍān, and go on pilgrimage to the Kaʿbah." It may also mean mere kalimah, *utterance (i.e., to say the two testimonies without practicing the obligations);* but this is not what the Prophet (pbuh) meant by Islam. However, it might be said that the Islam of the desert Arabs was of this sort. In response one might say that these people and others, when they became Muslims during the time of the Prophet (pbuh) were required to perform outward

deeds: prayers, giving zakah, fasting, going on the pilgrimage to Makkah, and so forth; none of them was allowed to stop by merely making the two testimony. Rather, such a person was considered to have committed a punishable act of disobedience. But if what Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal meant in this account was that Islam is nothing more than saying the two testimonies that: "there is no god but Allah" and, "Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah," then everyone who uttered them would be a Muslim. This, in any case, is one of the versions of what he said; the second version indicates that one is not a Muslim unless he both utters the two testimonies and prays. If one does not pray, he is an unbeliever. According to the third version, one is also considered an unbeliever if he neglects giving zakah. As for the fourth vesion, it indicates that one is considered an unbeliever by virtue of neglecting giving zakah if he takes up arms against the Imām, *ruler,* on account of it, whereas if he simply neglects to give it yet without resisting the Imām, he is not to be so considered. It has also been related on his [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's] authority that if one were to say, "I give zakah, but not to the Imām," then the Imām has no right to kill him. In addition, there are versions attributed to him according to which one becomes an unbeliever by neglecting to fast or go on pilgrimage; that is, if he determines never to make the pilgrimage. And of course, if it may be said that someone who neglects any of the five pillars of Islam is thereby rendered an unbeliever, then Islam cannot possibly be anything but words that one utters. However, what is meant [by these various accounts] is that if one utters the words of the testimony, he enters Islam; he is then said to be a Muslim, though not necessarily a believer in the sense of having belief in his heart. To say that one is a Muslim in this sense does not require that one make the exception, since to become a Muslim in this way is a universally recognized command. However, if one says that he is a Muslim in the sense of performing the duties involved in the five pillars, he may make the exception. Hence, the level of Islam in regard to which one need not make the exception is that level achieved through saying of the two S͟hādahs, *two testimonies,* alone; making the exception is not applicable to it since it is not subject to growth or diminution [as is one's performance of the fundamental religious duties of Islam].

There are three sayings about the meaning of the word Islam. [The K͟hārijites and the Mu'tazilites] said that it is Iman. Others said it is the kalimah, *utterance* [i.e., shahādah] that is the saying of, "there is no god but Allah" and that "Muḥammad is His Messenger." These two sayings have some other aspects, which will be

mentioned later. But the real meaning is what the Prophet (pbuh) clarified when he was asked about Islam and Iman. He interpreted Islam to mean "outward deeds," and Iman as believing the five principles (as affirming belief in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, and in the Divine Predestination of good and evil). Hence, if the words Islam and Iman are cited together, then we have to interpret each of them in the same way the Prophet (pbuh) did. Whereas, if the word Iman is used in isolation [without being joined to Islam] then it implies Islam. Also, if the word Islam is used alone then it may imply Iman. But the question that arises is: Does Iman require Islam? People have debated over this. And it is worth mentioning that Allah promises Paradise to believers, but not to Muslims. However, He orders people to embrace Islam, which He considers the only religion He will accept from human beings. And it was with Islam that Allah sent all the prophets. Allah says: "If anyone seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers" (3:85). He also says: "Indeed, the religion in the Sight of Allah is Islam . . ." (3:19). Noah said to his people, Allah says: "Relate to them the story of Noah. Behold! He said to his people: 'Oh, my people, if my stay with you and my reminding you of the Signs of Allah is hard on you, then I put my trust in Allah. So devise your plot, you and your partners, and let not your plot be in doubt for you. Then pass your sentence on me and give me no respite. But if you turn back [consider]: no reward have I asked of you: my reward is only due from Allah, and I have been commanded to be one of the Muslims'" (10:71–72). Allah says that none will escape penalty except the believers. Allah also says: ". . . We said: Embark therein, two of each kind, male and female, and your family—except those against whom the Word has already gone forth, and the believers. But only a few believed with him." (11:40); and Allah also says: "And it was inspired to Noah: 'None of your people will believe except those who have believed already . . .'" (11:36). And Noah said, Allah says: ". . . I am not going to drive away those who believed . . . (11:29).

Allah also says about Abraham that his religion is Islam. Allah says: "And who turns away from the religion of Abraham except him who fools himself? Him We chose and rendered pure in this world: and he will be in the Hereafter in the ranks of the Righteous. Behold! his Lord said to him: 'Bow [your will to Me].' He said: 'I bow [my will] to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe.' And this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons, and so did Jacob; 'Oh my sons! Allah has

chosen the [true] religion for you; then die not except as Muslims'" (2:130–32). Allah also says: "And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face [himself] to Allah and he is a Muḥsin, *good doer.* And follows the religion of Abraham. And Allah did take Abraham as an intimate friend" (4:125). Hence, happiness will be attainable through the combination of these two qualities. Allah says: "Yes, but whoever submits his face to Allah and is a Muḥsin, *good doer,* then his reward is with his Lord, on such shall be no fear nor shall they grieve" (2:112). Likewise, Allah links Islam with Iman and the Day Hereafter and with good works. Allah says: "Those who believe and those who follow the Jewish [scriptures], and the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (2:62). It follows that Islam, which is combined with the Iḥsān that Allah commands, and Iman, which is associated with righteous deeds, are inseparable from each other. For the promise attached to both is the same, namely, reward and exemption from punishment. For negation of fear is a cause that requires negation of the source of fear. This is why Allah says: ". . . On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (2:62), but not "they do not fear." For there shall be no reason for them to fear, although they fear Allah. Moreover, He relates that they shall not grieve. For grief is based on what happened in the past. So they shall not grieve at all, neither in the grave nor in the Courtyards of Resurrection. On the other hand, they may feel fear for what could occur before entering Paradise, although they shall not grieve. Allah says: "Behold! Indeed on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve. Those who believed and used to fear Allah" (10:62–63).

However, absolute Islam [i.e., Islam that is not joined to Righteous deeds], in the Book of Allah, is not associated with entering Paradise, whereas it is associated with absolute Iman as indicated in the following sayings of Allah. Allah says: "Raise one with another in hastening towards Forgiveness from your Lord, and towards Paradise, the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers . . ." (57:21); and Allah says: ". . . And give good news to those who believe, that they shall have with their Lord the rewards of their good deeds . . ." (10:2). And He describes al-Khalīl [i.e., Abraham] and those who followed him with Iman. Allah says: ". . . So Lot believed in him [Abraham] . . ." (29:26). He thus describes him as a believer, saying: ". . . So which of the two parties has more right to be secure, if you know.

It is those who believe and confuse not their belief with wrong. Those are the ones who have security and they are the right-guided ones. And that was Our Proof which We gave Abraham against his people . . ." (6:81–83). He even describes him as having attained the highest level of belief, and as being the most righteous of the righteous after Muḥammad (pbuh). Al-Khalīl [i.e., Abraham] made special supplication to Allah to provide sustenance especially for believers, saying. Allah says: ". . . And provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day . . ." (2:126). He also prayed, saying. Allah also says: "Our Lord! And make us submissive to You and of our offspring a community of Muslims to You . . ." (2:128). As for Moses, he said, Allah says: "Oh my people! If you have believed in Allah, put your trust in Him if you are Muslims" (10:84). Allah says: "But none believed in Moses except the offspring of his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, lest they should persecute them . . ."(10:83). And concerning these events Allah says: "And We inspired Moses and his brother: 'Take dwellings for your people in Egypt, and make your dwellings as places for your worship, and offer prayers, and give glad tidings to the believers'" (10:87). We have mentioned the absolute bushrā, *glad tidings,* promised to Muslims, where Allah says: ". . . And We have sent down to you the Book as an exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings to the Muslims" (16:89).

Allah describes [Pharaoh's] sorcerers, after they believed in Allah, as being both believers and Muslims. Allah says: "They said: 'We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron'" (7:121–22); and He also says: "And you take vengeance on us only because we believed in the Signs of our Lord when they reached us! . . ." (7:126); and "They also said: 'Our only desire is that our Lord will forgive us our faults, that we may become foremost among the believers!'" (26:51); and ". . . They said: 'Our Lord! Pour out on us patience and constancy, and take our souls unto You as Muslims'" (7:126). Allah also attributes Islam to the Prophets of the Children of Israel. He says: "It was We who revealed the Torah [to Moses]: therein was guidance and light. The Jews have been judged by its standard, the Prophets who bowed [as in Islam] to Allah's Will . . ." (5:44). However, He attributes both Iman and Islam to the Disciples. Allah says: "And behold! I inspired the Disciples to have belief in Me and My Messenger. They said: 'We have belief, and bear witness that we are Muslims'" (5:111). Allah also

says: "... The Disciples said: 'We are the helpers of Allah; we believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims'" (3:52).

The real difference between Islam and Iman, as understood from the Prophet's (pbuh) ḥadith, is that Islam is dīn, *religion*. The word dīn is a noun of the verb dāna, which means *to submit* and *to humble oneself.* Accordingly, Islam means submitting to and worshiping none but Allah. Hence, whoever worships others beside Allah is not considered a Muslim. Likewise, whoever arrogantly refuses to worship Allah is not considered a Muslim. Philologists say that the word Islam means *submission to Allah through the deeds of both heart and body.* However, Iman means taṣdīq, *assent,* iqrār, *verbal confession,* and maʿrifah, *knowledge.* Hence it refers to the profession of the heart, which in turn implies work of the heart.

Accordingly, the foundation of Iman is taṣdīq, *assent,* verbal confession, and knowledge. Thus, it is "utterance of the heart," which implies work of the heart. The essence in it is taṣdīq, *assent,* and the work that is joined to it. For this reason, the Prophet (pbuh) interpreted Iman as consisting of believing in the heart and its [the heart's] humility, which implies having belief in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, and in His Messengers. Whereas he [the Prophet] interpreted Islam as a special submission [to Allah], which implies the five pillars. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Islam is overt and Iman is in the heart." Accordingly, Islam implies overt deeds, whereas Iman implies what is in the heart: taṣdīq, *assent,* knowledge, love, fear, and hope; and all of this is implied inwardly. However, there are some restrictions that might apply to these things. Thus, there are certain conditions that are connected with what the believer may do, on the one hand, and what the hypocrite may do, on the other. In support of this is the following ḥadith narrated by ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr and Abu Hurayrah: "A Muslim is one from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe. A believer is one whom people trust with their persons and property." In this ḥadith the Prophet (pbuh) interpreted Islam on the basis of an outward phenomena; namely, the safety of others from a Muslim. By contrast, he interpreted Iman on the basis of something implied; namely, people's willingness to trust the believer with their lives and property. The latter [Iman] ranks higher than the former [Islam]. For if someone is trustworthy, people are safe from his hand and tongue. However, not every person from whose hand and tongue others are safe is trustworthy. On the other hand, one may not harm the

people and still they may not feel safe from him. This is not a result of belief in his heart but rather of abandoning hurting people out of fear.

In another ḥadith narrated by ʿUbayd Ibn ʿUmayr, on the authority of ʿAmr Ibn ʿAbsah, from the Prophet (pbuh), a man asked the Prophet (pbuh): "What is Islam?" He replied: "Providing food and offering salutations." The inquirer then asked: "What is Iman?" The Prophet replied: "Tolerance and patience." Indeed, providing food as well as offering salutations are overt deeds that one does for different reasons. However, tolerance and patience are traits of the soul. Allah says: ". . . And enjoin patience, constancy, self-restraint, and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion" (90:17). This verse demonstrates that a person who is in a state of thankfulness and patience endures hardship and is kinder to his fellow beings. This is in contrast to the one who is impatient and, whenever he encounters any difficulty, will not show any tolerance.

As a continuation of this ḥadith, the inquirer then asked: "What of Islam is best?" The Prophet (pbuh) replied: "The one from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe." He [the inquirer] asked: "Oh, Messenger of Allah, who is the best believer?" He [the Prophet] replied: "The one with the best morals." He [the inquirer], asked: "Which among deaths is the best?" He [the Prophet] answered: "That in which your blood is spilled and your horse is wounded." He [the inquirer] asked: "Which jihād is the best?" He [the Prophet] replied: "To strive in the Cause of Allah with your belongings and person." He [the inquirer] asked: "Which among charity is the best?" He [the Prophet], replied: "That which one gives when he is wealthy and close-fisted, haunted by the fear of poverty, hoping to become rich, and still hoping to live [as a rich man]." He [the inquirer] asked: "Which among the prayers is the best?" He [the Prophet] replied: "The prayer in which one is completely devoted to Allah." He [the inquirer] asked: "Which Hijrah is the best?" He [the Prophet] replied: "Abandoning what Allah has prohibited." He [the inquirer] asked: "Which among the hours is the best?" He [the Prophet] replied: "That of midnight." A similar ḥadith was narrated on Jābir's authority, in which the following statement was used: "The best Iman is tolerance and patience."

In all other ḥadiths the Prophet (pbuh) interpreted Islam as submission in the heart to Allah as well as overt works. An example is the account narrated by Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] by Bahz Ibn Ḥakīm, on the authority of his father, who said that his

grandfather said: "By Allah! Oh, Messenger of Allah! I swore by all the fingers on my hand that I would not come to you! So, in the name of the One who sent you in truth, what did He send you with?" The Prophet (pbuh) replied: "Islam." Then he asked the Prophet (pbuh): "What is Islam?" The Prophet (pbuh) answered: "To submit your heart to Allah, to turn your face to Him, to pray the required prayers, and to give obligatory zakah." The Prophet (pbuh) then added: "Allah does not accept the Islam of a slave who became an unbeliever after being a Muslim." In another place, the same ḥadith was narrated as follows: "To say that you have submitted your face to none but Allah, to establish prayer, to give zakah, and not to kill a Muslim." In another place, the same ḥadith was narrated as follows: "To say I submitted my soul to none but Allah and I turned my face to Him." Similarly, Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr narrated, on the authority of Khālid Ibn Muᶜdān, on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Islam is like the light and a sign like the light on the road. Therefore you are to worship Allah and not to associate with any but Him, to establish prayer, to give zakah, to fast during Ramaḍān, to command good and to abandon evil, to pay salutation to people you know and do not know [if they answer your salutation]; if you do, the Angels will answer both of you. However, if they do not, the Angels will answer you and will put a curse on them, and to pay salutation to your family when you enter your home. Whoever does not fulfill any of these requirements, abandons his share in Islam; and whoever abandons this, abandons Islam itself."

Allah says: "Oh, you who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly . . ." (2:208). Mujāhid and Qatādah said that this verse was revealed to order Muslims to fully accept and obey all Islamic legislation. This saying does not seem to contradict that this verse was revealed concerning the People of the Book [whether they had converted to Islam or not], since all of them were commanded to do likewise. A group of people stated that this means obedience and their statement is related to what Ibn ᶜAbbās said that the phrase "enter into Islam" means to obey Allah and His Messenger, and this is considered part of the works of Iman. However, in this verse the word kāffah, *whole,* has different interpretations. Some said it means that all of you enter Islam. Others said it means enter into Islam as a whole, which is the right interpretation. For no human being is commanded to do anything other than "enter into all of Islam," but is commanded only to do what he is capable of. In His saying, "enter" is addressed to all of them; however, if what the word kāffah, *all,* conveys is the idea that they are all to enter it together, then this would

require that someone leave Islam in order for others to do so, in which case Islam could only be commanded of someone on condition that others were in agreement as a whole, as in performing the Friday prayer. However, this is a position that no Muslim holds. And if the word "all" means that all of them are to enter Islam, then all the commands found in the entire Qur'ān are of this sort. Allah says: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger . . ." (57:7);[19] and He also says: "And offer prayers and give zakah . . ." (2:43). Another verse in which the same word for "all" occurs is the one in which Allah says: ". . . And fight against the polytheists collectively . . ." (9:36), which means "fight against them all, not leaving a single polytheist with whom you have not fought," having been revealed after the breaking of covenants. It does not mean, "let all of you fight against them," for this would not be necessary; rather, they are to fight as the welfare [of the Islamic community] dictates. Moreover, waging jihād is a collective duty; so if individual duties do not apply to all those commanded to perform them, then how could collective duties be said to apply to them all? Rather, the intention is to apply the command generally to all fighters as in Allah's saying: ". . . As they fight against you collectively . . ." (9:36).

For Allah commands people to enter into the whole of Islam. That is, if it is an obligation for each person, one has to do it; if it is an obligation for a group of people, one has to believe that it is something he must do if he becomes able to, and if it is desirable, he has to believe in its goodness and be disposed to do it. Supporting this is a ḥadith narrated by Jarīr in which a man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said: "Oh, Messenger of Allah, could you kindly describe Islam for me?" The Prophet (pbuh) answered: "It is to testify that there is no god but Allah, to acknowledge what Allah reveals, to establish prayer, to give zakah, to fast during Ramaḍān, and go on pilgrimage to the House." To this the man replied: "I confess," in a long story in which it says that a large rat fell in a large hole in the ground and was killed. It was hungry and two angels put some of the fruits of heaven in its mouth. So his saying "and you admit of what Allah came with" means the confession that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah and he is the one who came with it.

[19] In MI.2 (p. 253) and DKI (p.229) this verse is referenced as 4:165. However, the correct reference is 4:136, as in MI.1 (p. 225), as it occurs in the middle of the verse. It also occurs as above.

In a ḥadith narrated by Abu Sulaymān al-Dārānī,[20] a delegation said: "We are believers." The Prophet (pbuh) asked: "What is your evidence?" They said: "Fifteen traits. Five of them the Messenger of Allah commanded us to do, five he commanded us to believe in, and five are customs we adopted before we converted to Islam, and we will maintain them unless you disapprove of any of them." The Prophet asked: "What are the five you are commanded to do?" They replied: "To testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger, to establish prayer, to give zakah, to fast Ramaḍān, and to go on pilgrimage." The Prophet (pbuh) asked: "What are the five that my messengers commanded you to believe in?" They said: "We are commanded to believe in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, and in Resurrection after death." The Prophet (pbuh) then asked: "What are the five customs you adopted before you converted to Islam and that you still keep?" They said: "Patience when afflicted, gratitude in case of abundance, acceptance of ill fate, honesty in fighting, and not gloating over the affliction of one's enemy." To this, the Prophet (pbuh) replied: "You are knowledgeable and wise men who [because you are true and sincere] are nearly prophets." He added: "I will tell you about five more traits to add to your fifteen so that you will have twenty if you are what you say you are: Do not gather what you will not eat; do not build what you will not dwell in; do not compete over what you will leave behind [when you die]; fear Allah, to Whom you will return and be presented in front of; and desire what you undertake and will abide in forever."

In this ḥadith the delegation differentiated between the five things that they were to do, Islam, and the five that they believed in, Iman. Indeed, many ḥadiths of the Prophet (pbuh) support this distinction.

And in the ḥadith narrated by Aḥmad, based on that of Ayyūb, on the authority of Abu Qilābah, on the authority of a man from Syria, on the authority of his father, the Prophet (pbuh) told him: "Embrace Islam and you will be in peace." The father inquired: "What is Islam?" He [the Prophet] said: "To commit your heart to the Will of Allah and to protect other Muslims from your tongue and hand." He [the inquirer] asked: "Which part of Islam is best?" He [the Prophet] replied: "Iman." He [the inquirer] asked: "What is Iman?" He [the Prophet] replied: "To affirm your belief in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers and in the life

[20] Abu Sulaymān al-Dārānī (n.d.) was a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 240.]

after death." He [the inquirer] asked: "Which of Iman is best?" He [the Prophet] replied: "Hijrah." He [the inquirer] asked: "What is Hijrah?" He [the Prophet] replied: "Abandoning evil." He [the inquirer] asked: "Which part of the Hijrah is best?" He [the Prophet] remarked: "jihād." He [the inquirer] asked: "What is jihād?" He [the Prophet] replied: "To fight against unbelievers wherever you find them, not to be a miser, and not to be a coward." The Messenger (pbuh) then added [three times)] "There are two deeds [or their like] that are considered the best of all deeds: a righteous pilgrimage and ʿUmrah [going on pilgrimage at a time other than that usually set aside for pilgrimage]." It is worth mentioning here that these two deeds are the best two [after jihād]. For the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Then there are two deeds." Moreover, this ḥadith clarifies the fact that Islam is a more global concept than Iman, which in turn is a more global concept than hijrah, which in turn is a more global concept than jihād. Islam means that you worship Allah alone and that you do not associate anyone with Him and sincerely believe in the religion of Islam. Islam is the only accepted religion and Muḥammad is the last Messenger of Allah. Hence, one is not considered a Muslim unless he testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger. Through these two affirmations of belief, one enters into Islam. Afterward, other obligations [e.g., establishing prayer and giving zakah] are to be fulfilled. If anyone abandons an obligation, his Iman decreases accordingly. However, if he wholeheartedly confesses that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger and faithfully performs all the obligations in order to please Allah, he will be rewarded. A great number of Muslims are born having Islam [outwardly and inwardly], with its requirement of Iman. However, they have not attained certainty or reached the rank of jihād. Therefore, they will be rewarded for their Islam and their general acceptance of what the Prophet (pbuh) commanded. For it may be that they are ignorant about the details of Islam. For example, they may not know that the Book was revealed unto him [the Prophet] or that an Angel [Gabriel] used to teach him about religion. Thus, if the message does not reach some people, then they are not required to know it in detail. However, they must confirm that the Prophet is the Messenger of Allah and that he is telling the truth about everything that he informs about Allah.

Then after Islam comes Iman, which is characterized by tranquility and certainty and is also distinguished by its quantity and quality. Iman leads one to the truth.

Believers are those who have Iman in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, and in the details of Divine Predestination, which they do not know.

Hence, believers have [in their hearts] the assurance and the conviction that Muslims do not have, for a believer must be a Muslim. However, the contrary is not true. For Islam does not require Iman. In other words, when people convert to Islam, abide by its laws, and obey Allah and His Messenger, they will be considered Muslims, having an absolute Iman. And, if Allah wills, the essence of Iman will gradually enter their hearts. However, a great number of people do not reach the rank of Iman. Such people are neither called unbelievers nor hypocrites. But they do not have knowledge of the heart, the conviction, and the love of Allah and His Messenger, which would enable them to overcome their doubts.

Similarly, if they are commanded to strive, but do not obey, then they will be threatened with punishment. That is why when the Prophet (pbuh) entered Madīnah, most of its people became Muslims, but when calamities and hardships befell the Muslims, some people became hypocrites. Had those hypocrites died before the calamities occurred, they would have died Muslims and entered Paradise even though they were not true believers. Allah says: "Alif, Lām, Mīm. Do people think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe,' and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false" (29:1–3); and "Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which you are now until He distinguishes what is evil from what is good . . ." (3:179); and "There are among mankind some who serve Allah, as it were, at the very edge: if good befalls them, they are therefore, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter. That is an evident loss!" (22:11). For this reason, Allah dispraises hypocrites who have rejected belief after they had accepted it by saying: ". . . The hypocrites are indeed liars. They have made their oaths a screen [for their misdeeds]: thus they hinder [people] from the Path of Allah: truly evil are their deeds. That is because they believed, then they rejected belief: so a seal was set on their hearts. Therefore they understand not" (63:1–3); and "The hypocrites are afraid lest a Sūrah should be sent down about them, showing them what is in their hearts. Say: '[Go ahead and] mock! But certainly Allah will bring to light all that you fear.' If you ask them [about this], they declare: 'We were only talking idly and joking.' Say: 'Was it at Allah and His Signs, and His Messenger, that you were mocking? Make you no excuses: You have rejected belief after you had

accepted it. If We pardon some of you, we will punish others among you, because they were criminals'" (9:64–66). Thus, He commands the Prophet (pbuh) to tell them that they had rejected Iman after they had accepted it.

The claim made by some concerning such verses as these is invalid, to the effect that after having professed belief, they disbelieved with their tongues after having first disbelieved in their hearts. For professing belief with one's tongue while disbelieving in one's heart goes hand in hand with [utter] disbelief. Hence it may not be said, "you have become unbelievers after having believed," for what this really means is that such people have never ceased to be unbelievers in the first place. And if what is meant here is, "you displayed unbelief after having displayed belief," then the only people they have displayed anything to are their intimate associates, and with their intimate associates, they have continued to be as they were in the beginning. Rather, when they behaved as hypocrites and were warned that a chapter [of the Qurʾān] would be revealed to manifest the hypocrisy in their hearts, and when they spoke derisively [of Allah's signs] they became unbelievers after having believed. Moreover, the term "unbelievers" does not imply that they were still hypocrites. Allah says: "Oh, Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be harsh against them; their abode is Hell, and worst indeed is that destination. They swear by Allah that they said nothing [bad], but really they said the word of unbelief and they disbelieved after accepting Islam, and they resolved that which they were unable to carry out, and they could not find any cause to do so, except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them of His Bounty. If they repent, it will be better for them, but if they turn away, Allah will punish them with a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter . . ." (9:73–74). He says here, "they became unbelievers after having become Muslims;" the Islam referred to here may be of the same sort as that of the desert Arabs referred to in verses quoted above, such that His sayings, "after their having believed," and "after their having become Muslims," bear the same meaning. They may, however, still be hypocrites, since they have not entered a state in which they possessed any belief whatsoever, the reason being that they have displayed unbelief and apostasy. And for this reason they are called upon to repent as in the above verse: if they repent, it will be better for them, but if they turn away from their previous repentance, they shall be afflicted with a grievous punishment both in this world and the next. This situation is similar to that of someone who manifests unbelief with the result that the Messenger wages jihād against him by

establishing limits and penalties for him. Mention of this is made in the command to "fight against the unbelievers and hypocrites, showing them no mercy;" about such people it is also said that they are "without protectors nor supporters on earth."

However, those who became unbelievers after having become Muslims are to be distinguished from those who became unbelievers after having professed belief. For they have sworn by Allah to do what they have said; they have also uttered the word of unbelief after having become Muslims and sought that which they had not attained, which indicates that they sought it persistently yet did not reach their intended destination. For Allah did not say, "they sought after what they had not done," but rather "what they had not attained," since both a saying and a deed came from them. Allah says: "If you ask them, they will declare: 'We were only talking idly and joking . . .'" (9:65). Hence they confessed to what they had done and even apologized; thus Allah says: "Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after you had believed. If We pardon some of you, We will punish others among you because they were criminals" (9:66), which indicates that as far as they were concerned, they had not committed unbelief. In fact, they did not consider what they had said or done to be infidelity whatsoever. However, this verse makes it clear that mocking Allah, Allah's Signs, and His Messenger is unbelief that may be committed after one becomes a believer. And this in turn indicates that those spoken of here had a weak belief, as a result of which they committed this forbidden act that they knew to be forbidden, although they did not believe it to be outright unbelief. Hence, more than one of the pious ancestors stated, concerning the description of the hypocrites to whom a proverb was applied in Sūrat al-Baqarah, that they saw, then were blinded; they knew, then denied; they believed, then disbelieved. Likewise Qatādah and Mujāhid said: "Allah applies a proverb to the way in which they approached the believers, heard the message the Prophet had brought, then lost the light they had attained." Allah says: "Their likeness is as the likeness of one who kindled a fire; then, when it lighted all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness so they could not see. They are deaf, dumb, and blind, so they return not [to the right path]" (2:17–18).

There are those who claimed that the term "light" in this verse refers to the protection which was provided for their lives and wealth as long as they were in this world, and which they were stripped of when they died, just as the person

mentioned in the verse is stripped of the light he once enjoyed. However, this is not the meaning conveyed by the verse. Allah says: ". . . And left them in darkness so they could not see. They are deaf, dumb, and blind, so they return not [to the right path]" (2:17–18). Moreover, on Judgment Day they will be in torment. Allah says: "On the Day when the hypocrites, men and women, will say to the believers: 'Wait for us! Let us get something of your Light!' It will be said: 'Go back to your rear! Then seek a light!' So a wall will be put up between them, with a gate therein. Inside it will be Mercy, and outside it will be Torment. [The hypocrites] will call the believers: 'Were we not with you?' The believers will reply: 'Yes! But you lead yourselves into temptation. . .'" (57:13–14). More than one of the pious ancestors said: "On the Day of Judgment, a hypocrite will be given a light, then the light will be extinguished." For Allah says: ". . . That Day Allah will not permit the Prophet (pbuh) and those who believe with him to be humiliated. Their light will run forward before them and their right hands, while they say, 'Our Lord! Perfect our light for us and grant us Forgiveness . . .'" (66:8).

Qurʾānic interpreters have said that when the believers see the light of the hypocrites extinguished, they asked Allah to perfect their light for them and grant them Paradise.

Ibn ʿAbbās said: "On the Day of Judgment, every Muslim will be given light. But the light of the hypocrite will be extinguished." So the believer feels frightened when he sees the light of the hypocrite extinguished. Then he [Ibn ʿAbbās] said: "Our Lord! Perfect our light for us." This has been established in the collections of sound traditions, from the tradition of Abu Hurayrah and Abu Saʿīd, various forms of which are accepted from the Prophet (pbuh); it was narrated by Muslim on the basis of the tradition of Jābir. It is also well known from the tradition of Ibn Masʿūd, which is the longest version, and from that of Abu Mūsā in the long tradition, in which it is mentioned that he called upon the Day of Judgment, saying: "Let every community follow that which it has followed before, such that everyone who has worshiped the sun shall worship the sun, all who have worshiped the moon shall worship the moon, and those who have worshiped ṭāghūt, *idols,* shall worship idols. Moreover, each community shall retain its hypocrites, who will be approached by Allah in a form they have never known. He will say: 'I am your Lord,' to which they shall reply: 'May Allah protect us from you! This is the place where our Lord comes to us, and if He were to come to us

we would recognize Him.' Allah then comes to them in the form they do know and says: 'I am your Lord,' to which they reply: 'You are our Lord,' and they follow him." In one account, he "reveals his leg," while in another he says: "Is there some sign between you and him by which you might recognize him?" They reply: "Yes, he will reveal one of his legs." So there will be no one who used to bow down to Allah of his own accord but that he will be allowed to bow down once more, nor is there anyone who used to prostrate himself before Allah in a hypocritical manner but that Allah turns his back into a single, flat surface such that whenever he wants to bow down, he falls onto the back of his neck, while his back remains [crooked] like the horn of a bison. They will raise their heads, only to find their light before them and in their right hands, while the light of the hypocrites is extinguished and they say: "Allow us to borrow some of your light."

Hence, it became apparent that in terms of outward appearances, hypocrites are gathered in on Judgment Day along with believers, just as they mingled with them in this world. But then the truth becomes manifest: one group bows down to its Lord, while another is unable to do so, since during their time on earth they did not bow down to Him. Rather, their intention was to dissimulate before other people. And the reward received in the Hereafter corresponds to the actions one has done on earth; therefore, they were given light that is then extinguished because when they were still in this world, they entered into belief and then departed from it. For this reason Allah speaks in parable fashion about those of them who believed and later fell again into unbelief, and those who are given light in the afterlife that is then extinguished. He says of them: ". . . Do not return" (2:18). According to Qatādah and Muqātil, the meaning of this clause is that they never return from the error into which they have strayed, whereas al-Suddī held that it means they do not return to Islam, at least not inwardly. A parable is told concerning what occurs in the world, and applies to those of them who believed and later disbelieved. As for those who continued to be hypocrites, he draws another simile, namely Allah says: "Or like a rainstorm from the sky wherein is darkness, thunder and lightning . . ." (2:19). Commentators have differed as to whether these two similes were meant to describe all of them, or whether each of the two applies only to some of them. There are two views on this question, the second of which is the correct one. For Allah says: "Or like a rainstorm . . . ," which confirms one of the two views, since this indicates that they may be likened either to this or to that. [All of] them may be seen to be illustrated in both similes, since some of them may resemble this or

that aspect more than others, but all of them bear points of resemblance or comparison to both similes. For this reason they are joined not with the disjunctive "or" but rather with the conjunctive particle "and."

For someone to say "or" here by way of allowing a choice, as when one says, "he sat with al-Ḥassan or Ibn Sīrīn," would make no sense, since the provision of a choice occurs in a command, when the request is not in the predicate; or the provision of a choice would be found in a command or a request, but not in a predicate. The same thing applies to one's saying that "or" is in the sense of "and," or to arouse doubts, suspicions, or confusion in those being addressed. For Allah desires, through such similes, to render things clearer and more comprehensible, not to arouse doubts or confusion.

The intent here is to provide the believers with a clear picture of their [the hypocrites'] state. To fulfill this, Allah cites two similitudes in the beginning of Sūrat al-Baqarah. In the first, Allah says: "Deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not return [to the path] . . ." (2:18). In the second, Allah says: ". . . They press their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap, all the while they are in terror of death. But Allah is ever around the rejecters of belief. The lightning all but snatches away their sight; every time the light [helps] them, they walk therein, and when the darkness covers them, they stand still. And, if Allah wills, He could take away their faculty of hearing and seeing; for Allah has power over all things" (2:19–20). The second similitude indicates that they could hear and see and that if Allah wills, that he could take away their faculty of hearing and seeing. And the first similitude indicates that at first they could see, but then could become deaf, dumb, and blind. Moreover, the second similitude indicates that if the light helps them, they walk therein, and when the darkness covers them, they stand still. Thus, they had two states: a state of illumination and a state of darkness. The first similitude indicates that they stayed in darkness. Hence, the first similitude describes the state of those who were in a state of illumination but ended in a state of darkness, whereas the second describes those who remain neither in a state of illumination nor in a state of darkness but rather their states vary according to the circumstances and the situation.

Allah also employs two metaphors to describe unbelievers using the particle aw, *or*. He [Allah] says: "As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert: the thirsty one thinks it to be water; until he comes up to it, he finds it to

be nothing, but he finds Allah [ever] with him, and Allah will pay him his account: and Allah is swift in taking account. Or [the unbelievers' state] is like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed with a great wave topped by a great wave, topped by [dark] clouds, depths of darkness, one above another: if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! For any to whom Allah gives no light, there is no light for him" (24:39–40). The first metaphor describes the state of unbelief wherein the unbeliever thinks he is acting righteously while in fact he is doing evil and does not know it. Therefore, he is in a state comparable to a mirage in a desert. The second metaphor describes the state of unbelief wherein the unbeliever does not believe in anything but due to his ignorance and waywardness, he is beneath layer upon layer of accumulated darkness.

Sometimes a hypocrite and an unbeliever may be characterized by the trait mentioned in the preceding section. Hence the two metaphors are divided according to people's types and states. Each example is cited for a different purpose, since they convey different images and meanings. That is why only one metaphor was cited for Iman; namely, light. Whereas for unbelievers, the metaphor cited was of light that has no real existence, like a mirage in the desert or a thick darkness. Similarly, the hypocrite is compared to someone who could see but then became blind, or to someone who swings in an unstable way between light and darkness. This indicates that among hypocrites is a group who [covertly] rejected Iman after they had accepted it. This is explained in detail by the scholars of ḥadith and interpretation and by biographers. There are some men who believed and then turned around and practiced hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is due to many reasons, one of which was the command [of Allah] to change the Qiblah, *direction of prayer.* As a result of this some people rejected Iman and it became a criterion by which to test people. Allah says: ". . . And We made the Qiblah [prayer direction, toward Jerusalem] which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger [Muḥammad] from those who would turn on their heels. Indeed it was great except for those whom Allah guided . . ." (2:143). What is meant here is that the Kaʿbah is the real Qiblah and that was the original intention of making it the Qiblah. For indeed the Kaʿbah, its mosque, and its sanctuary are far superior to Jerusalem. Above and beyond that, it is al-Bayt al-ʿAtīq, *the Ancient House,* and it is the Qiblah of Abrahām and other Prophets. Allah never commands any of the Prophets like Moses, Jesus, or any other one who came before the Prophet Muḥammad to direct his prayer toward the Qiblah of

Jerusalem. Indeed, He did not intend to appoint it as a permanent Qiblah. The rationale was to test the will of the people concerning the change of direction of the Qiblah in order to find out who followed the Messenger and who would turn on their heels [from Iman]. Thus, there is a wisdom in legislating it.

Also, some people rejected Iman after they had accepted it [became hypocrites]: when Muslims fled on the Day of Uḥud and the Prophet (pbuh) was wounded in his head and face, and one of his teeth, the rubāʿiyyah, was broken. Allah says: "So do not become weak [against your enemy], nor be sad, and you will be the superior [in victory] if you are [true believers]. If a wound has touched you, be sure a similar wound has touched the others. And so are the days [good and not so good], We give to men by turns, that [Allah] may test those who believe, and that He may take martyrs from among you. And Allah likes not the wrong-doers. And that Allah may test the believers and destroy the unbelievers" (3:139–41). Allah also says: "What you suffered on the day the two armies met [at Uḥud] was with the leave of Allah, in order that He might test the believers. And He might test the hypocrites also. These were told: 'Come, fight in the way of Allah, or [at least] defend yourselves.' They said: 'Had we known how to fight, we should certainly have followed you.' They were that day nearer to unbelief than to belief, saying with their lips what was not in their hearts. But Allah has full knowledge of all they conceal" (3:166–67). His saying: "And [to test] the hypocrites" also explicitly refers to those who had recently shown hypocrisy. It also [implicitly] refers to those who at first did not reject Iman and to those who were hypocrites and then became hypocrites again. His saying: "They were that day nearer to unbelief than to belief," indicates that before that day they were not nearer to unbelief than to Iman. That is, they were either nearer to Iman [than to unbelief] or had equal degrees of Iman and unbelief. For example, when Ibn Ubayy seceded from the Prophet (pbuh) on the Day of Uḥud, about three hundred people, representing one-third of the Muslims who participated on that day, seceded too. But not all these people were covertly hypocrites. For there was no reason for them to be so. For example, before that day, Ibn Ubayy used to show his Iman and obedience to the Prophet (pbuh). Moreover, he used to deliver a sermon every Friday, commanding people to follow the Prophet (pbuh). What is in his heart is known to only a few people. Furthermore, he was praised by his community, who had intended to enthrone him as a king. However, when the message was sent down, his covetousness led him to hypocrisy. So when he seceded on the Day of Uḥud

and said that he [the Prophet] consulted the youth but not me, many people who were not hypocrites seceded too. There are many other examples of people who became hypocrites after they had accepted Iman. If those people had died before the occurrence of the tribulation, they would have died as Muslims that would be rewarded. However, they would neither be regarded as true believers who adhered to Iman when tested, nor as true hypocrites who turned away from Iman when tested via tribulations. In the case of many Muslims these days, when they are tested [via tribulations], their Iman diminishes. Many of them become hypocrites, some of them turn back [if the enemy defeats Muslims]. However, they remain Muslims [if Muslims are defeated], although covertly as well as overtly they believe in the Messenger, but do not adhere to Iman when tested.

For this reason, these people frequently abandon their religious obligations and commit prohibited acts. These are the people who, when they said: "We believe," Allah replies: ". . . Do not say we believe, but say: we profess Islam. For Iman has not yet entered your hearts . . ." (49:14). That is, they are not true believers. For true Iman, when referred to in the absolute sense in the Book of Allah or the Sunnah, is not affected by tribulations. Allah says: "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their lives in the Cause of Allah: such are the sincere ones" (49:15). Unlike doubt, which does not occur except with regard to the knowledge of heart, suspicion applies both to the knowledge as well as the works of the heart. Therefore, nobody is characterized by [true] conviction except he whose heart is tranquil both theoretically and practically; that is, with respect both to what he knows and to what he does. Otherwise, if he knows the truth but suspicion enters his heart when a calamity happens, then he is not characterized by [true] conviction. Allah says: "In that situation were the believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking" (33:11).

Often a believer is exposed to a brand of hypocrisy, then repents and Allah accepts his repentance. Sometimes his heart may be exposed to hypocrisy but Allah protects him. And a believer is tested by Satan's evil suggestions and blasphemous thoughts that annoy him, as reported in the Companions' saying: "Oh, Prophet of Allah, indeed, one of us finds himself in a state where he would rather fall from the sky to the earth than speak about the evil thoughts in his soul." To this, the Prophet (pbuh) replied: "That is evidence of pure Iman." In another version it was

said: "It was even oppressive to talk about it." To which the Prophet replied: "Praise be to Allah! Who returned his guile of evil thoughts." In other words, the occurrence of such evil thoughts along with the hatred and aversion against them are evidence of the purity of one's Iman. People who experience this are like the fighter [for the Sake of Allah] who fights his enemy until he conquers it. This is the greatest jihād. The pure and sincere [Iman] is like pure milk. The reason is that it is pure is because it causes one to dislike satanic evil thoughts. Thus Iman becomes pure.

The general public cannot avoid being exposed to evil suggestions and thoughts. Some people welcome and encourage these thoughts, and then become either unbelievers or hypocrites; others whose hearts are full of sins and bestial passions do not revive such thoughts unless they seek religion, in which case they either become believers or hypocrites. Accordingly, people are more frequently exposed to evil thoughts when praying than when they are not. That is, a worshiper who wishes to draw nearer to Allah is more frequently exposed to Satan. Likewise the people of knowledge and religion are more frequently exposed to satanic thoughts than the general public, who have not obeyed Allah's ordinance or walked in His path, but instead follow their own whims, which distract them from the remembrance of their Lord. For they are the enemies of Satan, who tried his best to hinder them from making advances toward Allah. Allah says: "Indeed Satan is an enemy to you: so treat him as an enemy . . ." (35:6). The reciter of the Qur'ān is commanded to seek the protection of Allah from Satan in order to have Iman in his heart and to increase his conviction, tranquility, and spiritual health. Allah says: "We send down [stage by stage] of the Qur'ān that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe, and it increases the wrongdoers nothing but loss" (17:82). Allah also says: "Here is a plain statement to men, a guidance and instruction to those who fear Allah!" (3:138); and ". . . And it is a guidance to the righteous ones" (2:2); and ". . . You, those who believe, their belief is increased, and they do rejoice" (9:124).

Indeed, every believer feels that Satan tried his best to suggest evil thoughts to him in order to prevent him from benefitting from the Qur'ān. For this reason he is commanded by Allah, when he recites the Qur'ān, to seek the protection of Allah from it [Satan's incitement]. Allah says: "When you do read the Qur'ān, seek Allah's protection from Satan, the Rejected One. No authority has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is over those only who

take him as patron and who join partners with Allah" (16:98–100). It is clear that when one seeks the protection of Allah and asks His aid against Satan, Allah protects and helps him. Allah says: ". . . Repel [evil] with what is better; indeed, the one between you and him, there was enmity and it [will appear] as though he was a close friend. And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint—none but persons of the greatest good fortune. And if [at any time] an incitement to discord is made to you by the Evil One, seek refuge in Allah. He is the One who hears and knows all things" (41:34–36).

It is recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "I know a statement that, if one utters it, will cause all bad feelings to disappear; namely, it is: 'I seek the protection of Allah against the cursed Satan.'" So, Allah commands us to utter this statement whenever we seek good [in order not to be hindered by Satan] and whenever we are exposed to evil [in order to be defended]. For this reason, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Satan still comes to one of you asking him: who created this, who created that, until he asks: who created Allah? Whoever [of you] has such an experience, must seek the protection of Allah against Satan. And he must stop it." Thus Allah commands us to seek protection from him when Satan attempts to trap a person or make him commit an evil act or even prevents him from doing good as an enemy behaves and acts toward his enemy.

Indeed, the greater a desire one has for knowledge and worship, and the more capable he is of these things, the more frequently he will be exposed to evil thoughts. If Allah protects him against Satan, his reward will be greater. On the other hand, if Satan has the power to mislead him, his error will be greater. Al-Shaʿbī said: "The scholars of every community are the worst people, except those of Muslim communities. They are the best people."

The people of the Sunnah are the distinguished Muslims. So in Islam, Orthodox Muslims are to Islam as Islam is to other religions. That is, they are superior to other Islamic sects, just as Islam is superior to other religions. To put it differently, all communities, except Muslims, are misguided; they are led astray by their scholars, who are the worst group. In contrast, Muslims are rightly guided by their scholars, who are the best group among them. Likewise are the Orthodox Muslims, whose leaders are the best of the community. While the leaders of the people of heresy are more dangerous than the sinners. For that reason the Prophet

(pbuh) commanded them to fight the Khārijites and forbid fighting unjust rulers, unlike those who have a desire for knowledge and worship. Thus it appears to them that bad thoughts misguide them; however, they think that this will put them on the right path. And he who is safe from these evil thoughts is considered one from among the leaders of the pious, who are the leaders of guidance and fountains of knowledge, as Ibn Masʿūd said to his friends: "Be fountains of knowledge, lights of wisdom, lights of the night, pure-hearted; stick close to home, wear worn-out clothes, be known to the people of the heaven, and unknown to the people of the earth."

Chapter Twenty

Understanding Iman and Islam: Interpreted by the Messenger As the Ultimate Authority

What has to be known is that if the meanings of the words, and what is intended by them, that exist in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and were known by the Prophet (pbuh), then there would be no need to seek additional information from philologists or any others. Thus, jurists have said that words are of three kinds. One kind is defined by sharʿ, *law* (e.g., "prayer and "zakah"), and another is defined by language (e.g., "sun" and "moon"). The third is defined according to convention (e.g., qabḍ, *holding,* and maʿrūf, *kindness,* as indicated in Allah's saying: ". . . And treat them with kindness . . ." (4:19). It is related on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās that tafsīr, *the explanation of the Qur'ān,* is of four types. These are tafsīr known to Arabs through their language: tafsīr no one is excused for being ignorant of, tafsīr known to scholars, and tafsīr known only to Allah such that whoever claims to have knowledge of it is considered a liar. The Messenger interpreted the meanings of words such as "prayer," "zakah," "fasting," "pilgrimage," and similar words, and what is intended by them which is based on the words of Allah and His Messenger and also the word "wine" and other such words. On this basis their meanings are known such that if anyone wanted to interpret them differently from the Messenger, it would not be accepted from him. But talking about their derivations and their connotations, that is to be dealt with in ʿilm al-bayān, *rhetoric,* and refinement of judgment adds to knowledge and to clarifying the wisdom of the words of the Qur'ān. However, knowing what is meant by these words is not dependent on this.

There is no need to seek evidence from derivation or illustrations and proofs from the [speech] of the Arabs concerning the usage of the words Iman, Islam,

"hypocrisy," and "unbelief," because the Messenger has clarified their definitions since these words are of great importance. Therefore, in explaining these words, one should refer to the definitions given by Allah and His Messenger, for they are both unequivocal and sufficient. Rather, both the specific and general meanings of these words are known to the scholars and to people. On this basis, if one looks attentively at the way the Khārijites and the Murjiʾites explained the meaning of Iman, he is bound to see that their explanation contradicts that of the Messenger. He is also bound to know that obedience to Allah and His Messenger is part of the perfection of Iman and that he did not consider anyone who commits a sin to be an unbeliever [as the Khārijites say]. Let us suppose that if some people said to the Prophet (pbuh) that we believe without a doubt, in our hearts, in what you have brought to us, and we publicly testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger [this is a refutation of the Murjiʾites, who do not regard deeds as part of Iman]. But we do not obey your commands or prohibitions. That is, we do not pray, fast, make pilgrimage, believe in ḥadith, keep the trust, keep a promise, be kind to relatives, and we will not do any of the good things that you commanded. On the contrary: we drink wine, marry the maḥārim, *legally unmarriageable women, such as mothers and sisters,* with the outward manifestation of committing adultery, kill whoever we can of your followers and your community and take their property, and we even kill you and fight alongside your enemies. How could any sane person imagine that the Prophet (pbuh) would say to them: "You are [true] believers and your Iman is complete. I will mediate for you on Resurrection Day!" And that he [the Prophet] hopes that no one of you enter Hellfire. But every Muslim knows, by necessity, that he [the Prophet] said to them: "you are a people who are in the highest state of unbelief of the message and that I will fight and kill you unless you repent from that."

Also every Muslim knows that the Prophet (pbuh) did not classify the alcoholic, adulterer, or thief as qādhif, *the slanderer,* or as murtaddūn, *apostates,* who should be killed; rather the Qurʾān and ḥadith show that such people should be punished differently than the murtaddūn from Islam. Thus, the punishment, as mentioned in the Qurʾān, of the qādhif, *the slanderer,* and the adulterer was flogging; and of the thief, the amputation of the hand; however, if they were considered apostates, the Prophet (pbuh) would have ordered them killed. Hence, both views may be seen to be invalid when judged by the religion of the Messenger (pbuh).

The people of innovations were swayed by alien, false notions because they turned away from the straight path and started building the religion of Islam on premises they thought were correct, either through semiology of words or rationale of meaning, and they did not look attentively at the statements of Allah and His Messenger. Thus, this may have caused misguidance. Therefore, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] spoke in his well-known epistle in refutation of the views of those who hold to Qur'ānic interpretations that seem correct to them without basing such interpretations on explanatory statements made by the Messenger, his Companions, and those who followed them. He [Aḥmad] also discussed this matter in his letter to Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjānī concerning the refutation of the views of the Murji'ites. This is the same method that has been followed by all other authorities on Islam, who, whenever possible, take into consideration those explanations that were provided by the Messenger himself. Whoever departs from this approach will fall into heresies consisting of statements about Allah and his Prophet that, while they may not be outright falsehoods, are nevertheless not known with certainty to be true. Such a practice has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger. As Allah says about Satan: "[Satan] commands you to do only what is evil and shameful, and that you should speak against Allah what you know not" (2:169). He also says: ". . . Was not the covenant of the Book taken from them that they would not say about Allah anything but the truth? . . ." (7:169). This is the type of subjective interpretation of the Qur'ān spoken of by the tradition that says: "Whoever voices that which is nothing but his own personal opinion about the Qur'ān, let him take his seat in Hellfire."

However, it should be clear that any premises that contradict statements of Allah and His Messenger are a delusion. An example of this delusion is that when the Murji'ites abandoned the knowledge of Allah's and His Messenger's words, they started speaking about the words Iman, Islam, and others in ways they invented themselves. They said, for example that linguistically, Iman means taṣdīq, *assent,* and since the Messenger addressed the people in Arabic, then he must have meant taṣdīq by the word Iman. Then the Murji'ites added that taṣdīq could be covert [in the heart] and overt [with the tongue], or just covert. Hence, works are not part of Iman. They base this view on Allah's saying: "They [Josef's brothers] said: "Oh our father! We went racing with each other, and left Josef by our belongings and a wolf devoured him; but you will never believe us even when we speak the truth" (12:17).

In response to this it can be said that the word Iman is repeated more than any other word in the Qur'ān and the ḥadith. It is the essence of religion through which people come out of darkness into light, and which differentiates between the happy and the miserable and between those who are supporters and adversaries. And the entire religion follows from this Iman, and every Muslim needs to know this. Is it possible for the Messenger to have disregarded this and based Iman on the false premises that the Murji'ites claim? Of course, the quotation they have cited as evidence for the view that belief is taṣdīq, *assent*, is taken from the Qur'ān. Moreover, there are more widely attested sayings passed down on the authority of the Prophet concerning the meaning of belief than there are similar sayings that merely contain the word "belief." For, unlike a simple word out of some chapter in the Qur'ān, belief is something that needs to be known and passed down by all members of the community of Islam. Most believers have not memorized a single Sūrah [chapter of the Qur'ān], so it is not permissible to base the explanation of the origin of religion on such presuppositions as these. For this reason there have been so many disputes among those who have deviated from Allah's straight path; they have followed their own various ways, thereby bringing disunity to their religion and splitting into sects, and they have scattered and fallen into discord after having received [Allah's Revelations]. Such an observation is a general, absolute statement [which does not apply to any one particular group].

Therefore it is said that these two premises are not permissible. To clarify this issue, the question was raised: Who said the meaning of the words Iman and taṣdīq, *assent,* are used interchangeably? On this basis, the correct usage does not mean that words are synonymous. For example, it would be correct if you were to say: "you are not a Muslim" in place of "you are not a believer." It would also be correct if you said: "establish prayers" or "do prayers" in place of "be steadfast in prayer." However, the words "establish" and "do" are not synonymous to the words "be steadfast." Likewise, the words Iman and taṣdīq, *assent,* are not synonymous, and this for the following reasons.

First, it is true to say: "he affirmed what the reporter said," but not "he believed in him," or "had belief in him." Allah says: "But Lot had believed him . . ." (29:26); and "But none believed in Moses except some children of his people . . ." (10:83). Allah also says: "[Pharaoh] said you believe in him before I give you permission? . . ." (26:49); and "They said to [Noah]: 'Shall we believe in you, when the meanest [of the people] follow you?'" (26:111). Allah also says: ". . .

Say: He listens to what is best for you, he believes in Allah, and has faith in the believers . . ." (9:61). And as they said to Moses and Aaron: "Shall we believe in two men like ourselves, and their people are subject to us?" (23:47); and "But if you believe not in me, then keep away from me and leave me alone" (44:21).

In the question, "Do you not believe us?" the preposition li, *for*, is added to a transitive verb, which normally takes no preposition if the action is weakened, either by its being delayed, by its being expressed in the form of an active participle or a verbal noun, or a combination of the two. Hence someone might say, "so-and-so worships, fears and reveres Allah" [in which the verbs are treated as transitive verbs requiring no preposition]. However, if the active participle is used, one says, "he is a worshiper of his Lord," "a reverer of his Lord," and "a fearer of his Lord." If, on the other hand, you were to mention the verb, yet delay the action, you might strengthen it with the preposition li, as when Allah says: ". . . And in their inscription was guidance and mercy for those who fear their Lord" (7:154); and ". . . Then fear Me alone" (16:51). In this last verse the verb is used transitively without a preposition; instead, the unattached direct object pronoun iyyāya, *me,* is more complete than the use of the preposition would have been; whereas in the verse quoted before this, the use of the preposition in the phrase lirabbihim, *for their Lord,* is more complete than it would be had the preposition been omitted and the direct object pronoun in the accusative case, rabbuhim, *their Lord,* had been used. This is because the unattached pronoun in the accusative case, iyyāya, is considered more complete than the attached pronoun in the genitive case. Likewise, the strengthening of the noun, which appears in the sentence by the use of the preposition li, is more fitting than leaving it as it is. This may be seen in the verse that reads: ". . . Explain to me my dream, if it be that you can interpret dreams" (12:43). One might also say: ʿabartu ruʾyāhu, *I interpreted his vision.* We also have the verse that reads: "And indeed, they have done what really enraged us" (26:55); whereas one might also say g͟hiẓtuhu, *I enraged him,* without the use of the preposition li before the object pronoun, rather than g͟hiẓtuh lahu, *I enraged for him,* which, with the addition of the preposition, is incorrect. And there are many more examples of the same thing. In the statement, mā anta bimuṣaddiqin lanā, *you do not believe us,* the preposition has been introduced because the muṣaddiq, *active participle,* is being used; otherwise one would simply say, "I believed him," with use of an intervening preposition rather than ṣaddaqtu lahu, with the preposition before the object pronoun. And had the verb

been used rather than the active participle, they would have said, mā ṣaddaqtanā, *you have not believed us*. This is in contrast to the word Iman (i.e., the verb from Iman), with which the preposition is always used before its object pronoun [when this pronoun refers to a rational being]. Hence when one says, "I believed him," one does not express it as āmantuhu, without the preposition; rather, one says, āmantu lahu, with the preposition before the pronoun. Likewise one says, aqrartu lahu, *I acknowledged what he said,* whose meaning is closer to that of the phrase āmantu lahu than is the concept of belief or taṣdīq, *assent;* there is, however, also some difference between them [i.e., between iqrār and Iman].

Second, the word Iman is not synonymous with the word taṣdīq, *assent,* in meaning. To the reporter of an action, whether he witnessed it or not, it is said either: ṣadaqta, *you told the truth,* or ka<u>dh</u>abta, *you lied.* Thus, if one says "the sky is above us," the answer could be either, "you told the truth," or "you told a lie." Whereas the word Iman is only used in reference to a report about something that was not witnessed directly. When one reports something he witnessed, like saying, "the sun rose or set," it is said, "he told the truth," or "he told a lie." On this basis, it is said about witnesses and others: ṣaddaqnāhum, *we affirm their report,* and not ʾāmanāhum, *we have belief in them.* Indeed, the Arabic word Iman is derived from the verb amana, *to be secure,* which is used in reporting unseen matters that are entrusted to the reporter. Because of this, the phrase āmannā lahu, *we have believed for him,* is not used in the Qur'ān or anywhere else in the same sense as ṣaddaqnāhum, *we affirmed their report.* And if two partners share the knowledge of a matter, it is said that one of them affirms what his partner says but not that he has belief in him, because the matter entrusted to that partner was not unseen. Allah says: "Lot believed in him . . ." (29:26); and ". . . They said 'Shall we believe in two men like ourselves? . . .'" (23:47); and ". . . [Pharaoh] said: 'Believe you in him..'" (20:71); and ". . . He believes in Allah, and has belief in the believers . . ." (9:61). Thus He affirms their statements of what was absent in their reports. Hence the word Iman, as indicated by its usage and derivation, implies the meanings of assent and trust as well as acceptance. That is why they said [Josef's brothers to their father]: ". . . And you will never believe us . . ." (12:17). That is, you do not accept, trust, or have confidence in our report. Even if they were truthful, their father would not trust them. That is because [according to him] they were not trustworthy.

Third, unlike the meaning of the word taṣdīq, *assent,* linguistically the meaning of the word Iman is not opposed to takdhīb, *denial.* [This is a sign of their difference, proving that Iman and taṣdīq are not synonymous]. Linguistically, it is known that it is said to every reporter that he told the truth or that he lied. Or that it is said that we affirm or do not accept what he says. But it is not said that we have belief in his report or that we refute him [as the opposite of the first statement], as it is not said that you are a believer in him or a disbeliever in him. But what is known is that the word kufr, *unbelief,* is the term used in contrast to the word Iman. For example, it is said that he is a believer or an unbeliever and kufr, *unbelief,* is not restricted to takdhīb, *denial.* One's unbelief would be greater if he said to a believer: "I know that you are truthful but I will consider you an enemy and will not follow you." So unbelief, which contrasts with belief, is not mere disbelieving, which proves that Iman is not mere assent. Of course, belief is not merely taṣdīq, *assent.* Rather, the state of kufr, *unbelief,* is not only disbelief, but also opposition, enmity and rejection despite the fact that one believes, then belief must likewise be belief along with agreement, support and willing cooperation. But assent alone is not sufficient, for Islam is part of the reality referred to by the word Iman, *belief,* just as refusal to surrender and cooperate even though one affirms that this is part of the reality referred to by the word kufr, *unbelief.* Hence, every believer must be a Muslim, surrendered to Allah's Command, and this is what is meant by the work required by belief.

If it were said that the Messenger (pbuh) interpreted belief to mean that in which one believes, one might reply by saying that when the Messenger spoke of that in which one is to believe, he used the preposition bi, *in,* and not li, *for.* As for his own person, he is someone in whose message we are 'an nu'mina bihi, *to believe (in him)* and whom we are 'an nu'mina lahu, *to have trust {in him).* For Iman bihi, *belief in him,* with respect to the permanence and certainty [of his message] is a reality we are unable to see but about which he has spoken to us. However, not every unseen reality in which we believe is something we are required to obey. As for the trust we are to have in him, it is belief of the sort that requires us to obey him. It thus needs to be recognized that the Prophet is someone in whom we are to have both kinds of belief described above. Moreover, obedience to the Prophet is obedience to Allah, and obedience to Allah is part of the perfection of belief in him.

Fourth, some people say that the Arabic word Iman is derived from the Arabic word ʾamn, *security,* which is the opposite of the word khawf, *fear*. The Arabic verb āmana, *he has belief,* means that he has become secure. And they recited [for illustration] . . .[1].

According to the second premise, if it is supposed that Iman and taṣdīq *assent,* are synonymous, then their [the Murjiʾites'] claim that taṣdīq can only be in the heart or lip profession, may be answered in two ways. The first of these is manʿ, *prohibition*. Works are considered taṣdīq, as it was recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The eye commits adultery and its adultery is sight; the ear commits adultery and its adultery is hearing; the hand commits adultery and its adultery is assault; the leg commits adultery and its adultery is walking; and the heart hopes for all these and has passion for them, and the woman's farj, *private part,* shows this to be true or makes its false."

Likewise philologists and some sects among the pious ancestors and one of the later Muslims, al-Jawharī, said: "The righteous, upright man, like the utterly iniquitous, believes constantly, being one who demonstrates the truth of what he says by what he does." Al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī said: "Belief does not consist in [outward] adornment, nor in wishing or desiring. Rather, it is something that is established in the heart and confirmed by one's actions." This is a well-known statement of his that has been passed down in various versions. Likewise it was related by ʿAbbās al-Dūrī, who said: "It was related to us by Ḥajjāj,[2] on the authority of Abu ʿUbaydah al-Nājī, on the authority of al-Ḥassan [al-Baṣrī], who said: "The Arabic word ṣiddīq means *righteous [one],* whose truthfulness is reflected by his works." Al-Ḥassan al-Basrī said: "Iman is not achieved by wishing, but it is that which is firmly fixed in the heart and is proved through works. Allah would not reward the one who speaks well and acts badly, but will exalt the one who speaks and does righteousness." Allah says: ". . . To him mount up all words of purity. It is He who exalts each deed of righteousness . . ." (35:10). It has been passed down by Ibn Baṭṭah in both versions. In al-Ḥassan's statement

[1] The copies of *Kitab al-Iman* consulted (MI.1, p. 248; MI.2, p. 278; MZ, p. 258; and DKI, p. 251) all included a brief footnote which states that what was to be recited here was left blank.

[2] Al-Ḥajjāj, Ibn Minhāl Abu Muḥammad (?–217 A H), was a compiler of ḥadith, and al-Bukhārī transmitted some of his ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 258.]

quoted above, "wishing" or "desiring" refers to what one says, whereas by "[outward] adornment" he refers to belief's becoming an external "decoration," such that one displays outwardly without the reality of it existing in his heart. However, belief is that which remains in the heart and the reality of which is confirmed by one's outward behavior. For outward works confirm that there is belief in one's heart, and without such actions one gives the lie to his claim to have such belief, for that which is in the heart requires outward works, and the absence of the essential quality indicates the absence of the entity in which that quality inheres.

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī relates that ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Marwān wrote to Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr asking him about the following matters, upon which Saʿīd remarked: that you asked me about Iman. It is assent. That is, it means to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and in Resurrection Day. You also asked about assent. It is to act in accordance with what you accept from the Qur'ān, to ask Allah's forgiveness, to repent of any sin you committed, and not to persist in it. You asked about religion. It is worship; and you will not find a man belonging to one religion who abandons the worship of his religion and does not follow any other. If he did this, he would be a man of no religion at all. You asked about worship. It is obedience. If anyone obeys what Allah orders or prohibits, he has shown his preference for the worship of Allah. And he who obeys Satan in his religion and works, has worshiped him. Do you not see what Allah says to those who neglect their religion? He says: "Did I not enjoin on you, Oh you children of Adam, that you shall not worship Satan . . ." (36:60), and that their worship of Satan indicates that they have obeyed him in their religion. Asad Ibn Mūsā[3] said that al-Walīd Ibn Muslim said, on the authority of al-Awzāʿī, that Ḥassān Ibn ʿAṭiyyah said: "Iman is in the Book of Allah until it becomes work." Allah says: "The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned feel a tremor in their hearts . . ." (8:2), until this led them to work where Allah says: ". . . And those who offer prayers and spend out of what We have provided for them" (2:3). He said that I heard al-Awzāʿī say that Allah the Exalted says: "If they repent, offer prayers and give zakah, then they are your brothers in religion . . ." (9:11). This concludes that Iman in Allah is by the tongue, and assent of it is through works.

[3] Asad Ibn Mūsā, Abu Saʿīd (?–212 A H), was a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 260.]

Muʿammar[4] relates, on the authority of al-Zuhrī, that Islam is based on iqrār, *verbal confession,* whereas belief is based on works. Belief is both words and works in concert, neither of which avails without the other. Nor is there anyone whose words and works do not form a sort of equilibrium. For if his works weigh more than his words, he ascends to be with Allah, whereas if his words outweigh his works, he will not ascend. This view was passed down by Abu ʿUmar al-Ṭalmankī[5] with its recognized chain of transmission. Moreover, Muʿāwiyah Ibn ʿAmr[6] relates, on the authority of Ishāq al-Fazārī, on the authority of al-Awzāʿī, who said: "Iman is incomplete without words; and Iman and words are incomplete without works; while Iman, words, and works are incomplete without having intentions in agreement with the Sunnah."

Those who preceded us did not differentiate between Iman and works. To them, works are part of Iman and Iman is part of works. Indeed, Iman is a general word that is confirmed through works. Thus, whoever professes belief with his tongue and has understanding in his heart but is not truthful in his works will be a loser on Resurrection Day. This is something that is known on the authority of more than one of the pious ancestors and their successors, that is, that they consider one's works to be a verification of what one says. This view was passed down on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh). Similarly, Muʿādh Ibn Asad[7] has said: "It was related to us by al-Fudayl Ibn ʿAyyād, on the authority of Layth Ibn Abī Sulaym, on the authority of Mujāhid, that Abu Dharr once asked the Prophet (pbuh) about belief. He replied: "Belief is iqrār, *verbal confession,* taṣdīq, *assent,* and amal, *work.*" Then he recited the verse that says: "It is not al-birr, *piety,* that you turn your faces toward the East or the West [in prayers] but al-birr is [the quality of] the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of his love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to the poor who beg, and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set the slaves

[4] Muʿammar Ibn Rāshid, Abu ʿAmr (?–153 A.H.), was a jurist, reciter of the Qur'ān, and trustworthy scholar of ḥadith. He was born and raised in Baṣrah. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 260 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 8, p. 190.]

[5] Abu ʿUmar al-Talmankī Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad (?–429 A.H.) was a great authority on ḥadith and reciter of the Qur'ān and wrote several books on the Sunnah. He lived in Cordoba, Spain. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 260.]

[6] Muʿāwiyah Ibn ʿAmr Ibn al-Muhallab al-Azdī (?–214 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith, whom Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal said was a trustworthy transmitter of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 260.]

[7] Muʿādh Ibn Asad (?–221 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith; several later compilers of ḥadith, including al-Bukhārī, used some of his Sunans. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 261.]

free and offers the prayers, and gives the zakah, and who fulfill their covenant when they make it, and who are patient in extreme poverty and ailment and at the time of panic. Such are the people of the truth and they are the pious ones" (2:177).

This tradition concerning Abu Dharr has been passed down in more than one account. If it is indeed what the Prophet himself said, then there is no basis on which to dispute it, whereas if they have passed it down in some other form that bears the same meaning, then this indicates that it is a recognized usage in their [the Arabs'] language for one to say: "He verified the truth of his words by what he did." It has also been said by the Islamic authority al-Harawī: "Belief, all of it is taṣdīq."

Similarly the second reply holds that if the root of belief is taṣdīq, then it is assent in something specific, just as ritual prayer is a particular kind of supplication, the pilgrimage involves heading toward a particular destination, and fasting involves abstaining from something in particular. Moreover, this type of taṣdīq has certain essential attributes that are always associated with it and that have come to be included within the definition of the term when it is used in an absolute sense. For the absence of an essential property necessitates the absence of the entity in which this essential property inheres. Hence the dispute over terminology continues, the question being: Does belief convey the notion of work by implication, or by [logical] necessity?

It is worthy of note here that the greatest dispute among Orthodox Muslims is a dispute over words. After all, those who say that Iman is words are in agreement with all Orthodox Muslim jurists, such as Ḥammad Ibn Abī Sulaymān, and he is the first to say, along with those who follow him from the people of the [city] of Kūfah, that they are in agreement with all orthodox scholars over the fact that all sinners will be under threat and censure. If they say that their belief is as perfect and complete as that of Gabriel, then they are saying that in accordance with the view of the Islamic community, someone who has belief yet does not perform his required duties and commits forbidden acts deserves to be rebuked and punished. They are also saying that, in accordance with the community's consensus, there are among those who have committed grave sins, individuals who will enter Hellfire. Those Orthodox Muslims who decline to call any major sinner a believer are in agreement that such a person shall not abide eternally in Hell. For there is

no disagreement among Islamic jurists concerning those who have committed sins as long as they have confessed both inwardly and outwardly the truth of the message brought by the Prophet. And according to reports passed down on his authority by numerous independent sources, such individuals are under threat of punishment, and among them there are those whom Allah and the Messenger have stated shall enter Hell. However, none of them remain there eternally, nor are they considered to be apostates upon whom one may legitimately wage war. Nevertheless, there are some, such as the Khārijites and the Muʿtazilites, who hold the heretical view that they do remain eternally in Hell, as well as the extremist Murjiʾites, who maintain that we cannot be certain that any of them shall enter Hell and that, instead, we must withhold judgment on all such matters.

A view that has been attributed to the extremist Murjiʾites holds unequivocally that belief cannot be ascribed to anyone with certainty. As for the Khārijites, one might reply to them by saying that if someone denies that the thief, the adulterer, the drinker of alcohol, or anyone else may be said to have belief, he does not thereby consider them to be apostates from Islam; rather, he may punish this one with flogging and that one by cutting off his hand. However, he would have none of them put to death except for the adulterer. And even if he did have him put to death, he would not have him put to death as an apostate, for the apostate is to be put to death by the sword after being called upon to repent, whereas this person is stoned without being called upon to repent. This indicates that even if he says that such individuals have no belief, he nevertheless does not consider them to be apostates from Islam, despite the manifest nature of their sins. Nor are they like the hypocrites who used to act outwardly as though they were Muslims while inwardly they were unbelievers. And as for hypocrites such as these, he would only have them punished for outwardly visible sins.

Based on the discussion of Iman, people disagree on whether the language contains legal terms that the Prophet (pbuh) shifted away from their original referents in the language, or whether these terms remain the same in the law as they were in the language, the Prophet (pbuh) not having added to their meanings. Do the words "prayer," "zakah," "fasting," and "pilgrimage" retain the same meaning in legislation as in they do in the language, with only one addition, namely, legislative rules? Their intention is that Iman is mere taṣdīq that takes place in the heart and by the tongue. The third group stated that the Legislator [the Prophet] changed these terms, as normal speakers do. Thus, they are linguistically

considered a figurative form of speech whereas, according to the norms of the Legislator, they are real. It is evident that the Legislator neither transferred nor changed these words but used them in a conditioned, not an absolute sense, as he uses their counterparts. Allah says: "... Pilgrimage to the House is a duty that people owe to Allah ..." (3:97). Here He makes mention of a specific pilgrimage, namely, pilgrimage to the Kaʿbah in Makkah. Likewise He also says: "... [So it is not a sin] for those who perform pilgrimage or minor pilgrimage [ʿumrah] ..." (2:158). The word "pilgrimage" does not include just any destination; rather, it refers to a particular destination that is denoted by the word itself without any change in the language. And if the poet should say:

> And I witness many disbandments on the part of the [Banū] ʿAwf,
> who seek out [literally, make pilgrimage to] the saffron-dyed turban of al-Zibirqān.

He would be speaking in accordance with linguistic usage, having qualified his expression with "making pilgrimage to the saffron-dyed turban of Zibirqān." And of course, this particular pilgrimage is indicated by the use of the possessive construction [which would, translated literally, read, "the pilgrimage of the saffron-dyed turban ..."]; likewise, the particular pilgrimage that Allah has commanded is also indicated with a possessive construction or by the use of the definite article. Hence if someone says, "the pilgrimage is a duty incumbent upon you," the definite article makes it clear that what is referred to here is the pilgrimage to the House of Allah (that is, the Kaʿbah in Makkah); likewise, zakah is a name for something through which the soul is purified. For zakah of the soul is an increase in its goodness and its purification from evil; moreover, doing good for others is one of the greatest ways in which the soul may grow more righteous and pure. Allah says: "Take alms from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it ..." (9:103). Abandoning evil deeds is another way in which one's soul may be purified. Allah says: "... And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure [from sins] ..." (24:21). The root of the soul's purity is to be found in belief in the one and only Allah, and in being sincere toward Allah in one's religion; hence Allah says: "... And woe to the polytheists. Those who do not give zakah ..." (41:6–7),[8] a

[8] The reference to these verses in MI.1 (p. 253) and MI.2 (p. 284) gives the wrong word, Sīrah instead of Sūrah, for Sūrat al-Sajdah *The Prostration*, XXXII. MZ (p. 264) gives the correct reference, as above, but quotes verses 7 and 8, instead of 6 and 7. In DKI (p. 256) the correct reference is given for both the Sūrah and the verses.

verse in which commentators have interpreted the word zakah to be the equivalent of belief in the one and only Allah.

The Prophet (pbuh) stated the amount due in zakah and called it "the legally required zakah." So whenever one uses "the" with the word zakah it means the amount due, and the time of it is decided. However, it is known that the noun zakah means purity of the same kind that increases the good in the soul and removes its wickedness. Likewise, the word tayammum, *performing ablution without water,*[9] is used according to its well-known linguistic meaning in the verse where Allah says: ". . . Then take for yourselves clean sand or earth and rub therewith your faces and hands . . ." (5:6). Thus the word tayammum is used in its normal conventional linguistic manner, as Allah ordered people to touch the sand or earth and then to rub them off the face and hands. Thus the word tayammum, as used by the jurists, implies the act of rubbing. However, the Prophet (pbuh) differentiated between the initial rubbing of the sand or soil and the wiping of the face and hands that comes afterward. When Iman was ordered, its meaning was used in a conditioned sense to the belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. Likewise, the word Islam is conditioned to submission to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the words. Such is also the case with the word kufr, *unbelief,* when used in a conditioned sense. As for the word for "hypocrisy," it has been said that the Arabs had not been accustomed to using this word. However, it is taken from their speech; for the verb nafaqa resembles the verb kharaja, meaning *to emerge, go out,* or *depart*. From it we have expressions such as nafaqat al-dābbah, *the beast of burden died,* nāfiqāʾ al-yarbūʿ, *the jerboa's burrow,* and nafaq fil-arḍ, *a tunnel in the earth.* Allah says: ". . . Then if you were able to seek a tunnel in the ground . . ." (6:35). As for the hypocrite, he is the one who has departed from the belief inwardly after having entered it outwardly. Hence, the word for "hypocrisy" is conditioned as being hypocrisy with respect to belief, that is, a hidden departure from belief. There are those who refer to someone who has departed from obedience to the king as a hypocrite toward the king; however, the hypocrisy referred to in the Qurʾān is hypocrisy toward the Messenger.

[9] Tayammum is a form of ablution practiced when water is not available. A Muslim strikes his hands on clean earth, passes the palm of each on the back of the other, blows off the dust from them, and then passes them, in a rubbing manner, on the face. After doing this, a person is permitted to pray.

So when Allah and His Messenger addressed the people with these words, it was done in a specified, conditioned manner and not in an absolute manner, which could bear different interpretations. The Messenger clearly stated these restrictions, so that it could neither be said that the words had been taken directly from their linguistic usage nor that legislative rules were added without altering the words, but that the words were used specifically in the way the Legislator intended them to be. They were not used absolutely [i.e., with no restrictions]. For example, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Establish prayer regularly." He said so only after he had made clear the kind of prayer that was ordered. So the definition was applied to the prayer they knew. That is, the word "prayer" was not revealed to them before they knew what was meant by this word. Therefore, if anyone who says concerning the word "prayer" that it is used in a general sense based on linguistic usage, or that it has an inclusive meaning since it is used sometimes in a general sense and sometimes in a legal sense based on Islamic law, then such claims are weak. For this word is only used either in a command or a report. An example of a report would be Allah's saying: "Have you [Oh, Muḥammad] seen him who prevents a slave when he prays?" (96:9–10), as well as the chapter of the Qur'ān entitled Sūrat Iqra', *Recite,* which is one of the first chapters of the Qur'ān to be revealed. Some of the unbelievers of the Prophet's (pbuh) day, either Abu Jahl or some other than him, forbade him from praying, saying: "If I see him praying, cut off his head." However, when he found him prostrated [before Allah], he saw something so terrifying that he turned on his heels and fled. For Allah says: "Have you [Oh, Muḥammad] seen him who prevents a slave when he prays?" (96:9–10); here what is intended is a particular sort of prayer, not one that is detailed and comprehensive.

Also on the morning following al-Miʿrāj, *Ascension Night,* during which the five daily prayers were ordered, the Prophet (pbuh) established the prayers at their prescribed times to the people. The Prophet (pbuh) was led by Gabriel in prayer, and he in turn led the Muslims. So after that, when it was said: "establish the prayer," they knew that this was the prayer intended. It has been said that prior to this he had two prayers, one at the beginning of the day and the other at the end. For he did not address any of these words because their meanings are known to them, for such words would not be used in a comprehensive, restrictive sense so as to include every sort of pilgrimage, supplication, or fasting. This would only

apply if the words were used in an absolute, unrestricted sense, which is not the case.

So also with the words Iman and Islam, the meanings were clearer to the Muslims than that of any other matter. And when Gabriel asked the Prophet (pbuh) about Iman and Islam, while the people were listening, the Prophet (pbuh) remarked: "This is Gabriel. He has come to you in order to teach you in matters of your religion." That is, Gabriel came to show them the real and complete meanings of these words, so they would not just be satisfied with the lowliest realities to which these words referred. This we read in a sound ḥadith. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "The poor is not that feeble person who is satisfied with one or two mouthfuls or with one or two dates, but rather the one who does not possess enough to prevent him from needing the help of others; people do not remember him or give him alms; and he does not beg importunately." Indeed, people used to know the poor person as someone who is needy. To them the poor was one who showed his need by begging. But the Prophet (pbuh) pointed out that if someone shows his need by begging and is given things by people, then his poverty diminishes [by their giving to him], and begging for him thus becomes a sort of occupation. Hence, if he is a poor person who deserves to be given zakah if his needs are not met from any other source, and if he finds someone who gives him all he needs, then he is no longer labeled as poor. But the poor is the needy person who does not beg, and is not recognized nor given alms. This is the one who should be given priority to receive alms because he is truly destitute. Such a person is different from the one whose poverty stops by his receiving from those he begged from. The same applies to the Prophet's (pbuh) saying: "Islam is built on five [pillars]." Here he means that all these five are duties of any Muslim, for it is not enough for one to utter the two testimonies of belief, that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger. Also one should not be satisfied with general Iman but only with a detailed Iman. For this reason Islam was described in this manner.

Muslims are in full agreement about the fact that whoever does not utter the two testimonies of belief is an unbeliever. However, they differ over whether to consider someone who abandons any of the four deeds [i.e., prayer, zakah, fasting, and pilgrimage] as an unbeliever. If we say that Orthodox Muslims are in agreement that whoever commits a sin is not considered an unbeliever, we are referring to sins such as drinking alcohol or committing adultery. But there is a famous dispute over whether to consider those who abandon the pillars of Islam

as unbelievers. It was reported that Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] said concerning this dispute that he considered anyone who abandons one of the pillars to be an unbeliever. This position is adopted by Abu Bakr and a group of the followers of Mālik, such as Ibn Ḥabīb.[10] Another version is that only the one who abandons prayer and zakah is considered an unbeliever. A third version is that the one who abandons prayer and who refuses to give zakah and fights the ruler for it is considered an unbeliever. The fourth is that only the one who abandons prayer is considered an unbeliever. The fifth position is that one will not be considered a believer even if he abandons any of these requirements. These are well-known statements of the pious ancestors. Al-Ḥakam Ibn ʿUtaybah said: "Whoever deliberately neglects prayer, giving zakah, making the pilgrimage [to Makkah], or fasting during Ramaḍān has become an unbeliever." And according to Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr: "Whoever deliberately neglects to pray, give zakah, or fast during Ramaḍān has committed unbelief against Allah." As for al-Ḍaḥḥāk, he says that one is only exempted from prayer by giving zakah, whereas ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd has said: "If anyone establishes prayer but does not give zakah, it is as if he had not prayed." All these views were passed down by Asad Ibn Mūsā.

ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr has said: "Whoever drinks wine in the evening shall greet the following morning as a polytheist, and whoever drinks in the morning shall enter upon the evening as a polytheist." Ibrāhīm al-Nakhʿī was once asked: "How can this be?" He replied: "This is because [on account of drinking wine], he abandons prayer." Abu ʿAbd Allah al-Akhnas has said in his book: "Whoever drinks an intoxicating beverage is liable to neglect prayer, and whoever neglects prayer has departed from belief." And among the things that clarify this is that when Gabriel asked the Prophet (pbuh) about Islam, Iman, and Iḥsān, it was at the end [of the period of the establishment of Islam], after the legislation of the pilgrimage; and the pilgrimage was not established until the year 9 or 10 A.H.

It is generally agreed that the pilgrimage was not established before the year 6 A.H. Moreover, it is known that the Messenger (pbuh) did not command people to have belief or clearly explicate its meaning to them at that time. Rather, they already knew the origin of its meaning. A full discussion of these matters may be found elsewhere.

[10] Ibn Ḥabīb, ʿAbd al-Malik (?–238 A.H.), was a jurist in Spain. He wrote several books, including *Tafsīr al-Muwaṭṭa'*. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 266.]

What is meant here is that those whom the Messenger refuses to describe as believers or Muslims must have abandoned some of the obligations of Iman or of Islam, even if they continue to practice other obligations. And so, on this basis, the pious ancestors and the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) used to say: "A person may have both Iman and hypocrisy."

Abu Dāwūd al-Sijistānī said: "It was related to us by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and Wakīʿ on the authority of al-Aʿmash, on the authority of Shaqīq, on the authority of Abu al-Miqdām, on the authority of Abu Yaḥyā, who said: "Ḥudhayfah was asked who the hypocrite is, to which he replied: 'He is the one who knows Islam but does not practice it.'" Abu Dāwūd also said that it was related to us by ʿUthmān Ibn Abī Shaybah and Jarīr, on the authority of al-Aʿmash, on the authority of ʿAmr Ibn Murrah,[11] on the authority of Abu al-Bukhturī, on the authority of Ḥudhayfah, who said that there are four types of hearts: the qalb aghlaf, *uncircumcised heart,* which is the heart of the unbeliever; the heart of eloquent speech, which is the heart of the hypocrite; the desolate heart, in which there is a shining light, which is the heart of the believer; and a heart in which there is both belief and hypocrisy. The belief therein is like a tree whose roots tap into fresh water, while the hypocrisy is like a festering, bleeding sore; and whichever of the two overcomes the person is the victor. This statement has been related from the Prophet in the *Musnad.*

This statement by Ḥudhayfah is supported by Allah's saying that: ". . . They were that day, nearer to disbelief than belief . . ." (3:167). For prior to this time there was hypocrisy in their hearts that had not yet gotten the better of them. Then on the day of the Battle of Uḥud, their hypocrisy won out and they grew closer to being hypocrites than to being believers. ʿAbd Allah Ibn al-Mubārak related, on the authority of ʿAwf Ibn Abī Jamīlah, on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr Ibn Hind, on the authority of Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, who said: "Iman resembles a small bright white spot in the heart [whiteness and brightness refer to purity of the soul], so that whenever one's Iman increases, his heart's brightness increases, and when his Iman is complete, his heart will be completely white [i.e., wholly pure]. On the other hand, hypocrisy resembles a black spot in the heart [blackness refers to impurity of the soul]. So as one's hypocrisy increases, his heart increases in blackness, and whenever his hypocrisy reaches its highest level, his heart becomes

[11] ʿAmr Ibn Murrah (?–116 A.H.) was a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 268.]

completely black. So according to Allah, if you looked into the heart of a believer, you would find it bright [with whiteness]; and if you looked into the hearts of hypocrites and unbelievers, you would find them black." According to Ibn Masʿūd: "Wealth causes hypocrisy to spring up in the heart just as water causes green herbs to sprout." This statement was related by Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others. Such statements are found frequently in the writings of the pious ancestors, which made it clear that both belief and hypocrisy may be found in the same person's heart; this view finds support in both the Book and the Sunnah. For the Prophet (pbuh) made mention of the branches of belief, and also of the branches of hypocrisy, saying: "This branch [of hypocrisy] may be found along with many branches of belief." Therefore he once said: "Whoever has belief in his heart the weight of a speck of dust shall be brought out of Hellfire." Hence, whoever has even the least amount of belief shall not abide forever in Hellfire, even if he also has a great deal of hypocrisy in his heart. He will be tormented in Hellfire in proportion to the amount of hypocrisy in his heart, then be brought out of Hell. Hence we have the statement made to the desert Arabs. Allah says: "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith; but you [only] say, 'We have submitted our wills to Allah, for faith has not yet entered your hearts . . .'" (49:14). He denies that they have Iman in their hearts. However, this does not prevent them from having a degree of Iman. Likewise, He acknowledges the existence of belief in the heart of the thief, the adulterer, the one who does not desire for his brother [in Islam] what he desires for himself, and the one whose neighbor is not safe from his injurious conduct, as was mentioned earlier. Indeed, the Qur'ān and ḥadith are full of such examples.

Therefore, while some among the pious ancestors hold that the statement, "we have become Muslims," means, "we have submitted out of fear of the sword," and others hold that they truly became Muslims, we hold that both views are correct. For this statement only means that they have entered into Islam, while outward Islam is something into which hypocrites also enter. Hence, those who enter into Islam include those in whose hearts there is both belief and hypocrisy. It is known that he whose heart contains as little as an atom's weight of Iman comes out of Hell, unlike the sheer hypocrite, whose heart is wholly black and who will be in the lowest stratum of Hell. Because of this, the Companions were afraid of becoming hypocrites but not afraid of disbelieving Allah and His Messenger. This is because a believer is certain that he does not disbelieve Allah and His

Messenger and, therefore, he can say, "I am a true believer." Such a man knows this is based on his decisive belief. But Iman is not merely belief or assent. For there should be overt works that reflect this assent [as was discussed earlier]. For example, the love of Allah and His Messenger is part of Iman, so are loving what Allah commands and hating what He has forbidden. Because of this, the Prophet (pbuh) says in several places: "Whoever is happy for doing a good deed and unhappy for doing a bad deed is a believer." For he loves good deeds and rejoices in them and hates the bad deeds and is offended by them. This love and hatred are among the characteristics of Iman.

It is known that when the adulterer commits adultery, he does so because he likes committing that deed. But if he had within himself the fear of Allah, which vanquishes lust and is conquered by the love of Allah, then he would not have committed adultery. Allah says about Yūsuf (peace be upon him): ". . . [Did we order] that we might turn away from him [all] evil and shameful deeds for he was one of our servants, sincere and purified?" (12:24). So whoever is truly sincere to Allah would not commit adultery, but he does so because he lacks the devotion to Allah, and this is the Iman that is taken away from him at the time he commits adultery. But his acceptance [of the existence of Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers] is not taken away from him; and it is said that he is a Muslim but not a believer. The Muslim who deserves Allah's reward must accept certain truths. Otherwise, he would be considered a hypocrite. However, the mere fact that someone accepts the teachings of Islam does not mean that he has in his heart the required conditions of belief, such as the true love of Allah and His Messenger, the fear of Allah, sincerity to Him in all one's deeds, and putting trust in Him. But it may happen that even though he accepts the Messenger's message, his deeds are not in accordance with his beliefs. To him, his family and his wealth are dearer to him than Allah, His Messenger, and striving in Allah's Cause. This concern was addressed to the believers in Sūrat al-Tawbah [Barā'ah], in which Allah says: "Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates and your kindred and the wealth that you have gained; the commerce in which you fear a decline: or the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah, or his Messenger or striving in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about his decision, and Allah guides not the sinners" (9:24). It is a known fact that many Muslims possess these qualities.

It is affirmed that a man is not considered a believer until Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than all of mankind. Also, a believer is he who does not doubt and strives [in the Cause of Allah] with his soul and property. Hence, Iman cannot be attributed to one who does not have in his heart the requirements of Iman, even if he has the assent. This is because he must have some love and fear of Allah besides assent. Otherwise, it would not be Iman at all. Rather, it is like the belief of Pharaoh, the Jews, and Iblīs. This is what the pious ancestors criticized the Jahmites for. Al-Ḥumaydī once said that he had heard Wakīʿ say: "Orthodox Muslims say that Iman is both words and works, while the Murjiʾites say that Iman is a saying, and the Jahmites say that Iman is knowledge." In another version of this statement he adds: "this is unbelief." Muḥammad Ibn ʿUmar al-Kullābī reports having heard Wakīʿ say: "The Jahmites are more odious than those of the Qadarite's school." Wakīʿ also said: "The Murjiʾites are those who say that verbal confession is separable from outward works; but whoever says such a thing shall perish. And whoever says, as Jahm did, that one's intention may be separated from outward work, is an unbeliever." This view was shared by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal.

For this reason Orthodox Muslims have held the view that belief is both sayings and works; this view has also been part of Orthodox Muslim rites, while more than one person has reported their unanimous agreement on it. We have already mentioned, on the authority of al-S̲h̲āfiʿī (may Allah be pleased with him), the unanimous agreement on this view reported in his book *al-Umm,* where he states that: "The Companions of the Prophet, those who came after them, and our own contemporaries as well, have held unanimously that belief is a saying, a work, and an intention, and none of these three may be separated from any of the others." Moreover, Ibn Abī Ḥātim mentions in his *Manāqib* that he once heard Ḥarmalah[12] say: "Ḥafṣ al-Fard and Miṣlāq al-Abāḏī once met together with al-S̲h̲āfiʿī in al-Jarawī's house, where they debated with him on the subject of belief. Miṣlāq argued that belief may increase or decrease, while Ḥafṣ al-Fard argued that belief is simply a saying. Ḥafṣ al-Fard won out over Miṣlāq in the debate, while Miṣlāq began to weaken, whereupon al-S̲h̲āfiʿi heatedly entered the argument and settled the issue by saying that belief is both saying and work, and that it may either increase or diminish, thereby silencing Ḥafṣ al-Fard.

[12] Ḥarmalah Ibn Yaḥyā Ibn ʿImrān (?–243 A.H.) was a jurist and scholar of ḥadith who transmitted ḥadith from al-S̲h̲āfiʿī. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 271.]

Abu ʿAmr al-Ṭalamankī has related, based on his well-known chain of transmission, on the authority of Mūsā Ibn Hārūn al-Ḥammāl,[13] who said: "Isḥāq Ibn Rāhwiyah dictated to us that belief is a saying and a work, and that it may increase or diminish. There is no doubt that this is as we have described, but rather we came to understand this through sound accounts and accurate, generally recognized traditions relating to the deeds and sayings of Muḥammad and his Companions, as well as accounts, each of which was passed down on the authority of just one of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) or their Successors. Scholars who came after the Successors of the Companions were likewise in agreement on this single view. The same was true during the era of al-Awzāʿī in Syria, Sufyān al-Thawrī in Iraq, Mālik Ibn Anas in the Ḥijāz, and Muʿammar in Yemen, all of whom held the view we have explicated here, according to which belief is a saying and a work, which may either increase or diminish.

Isḥāq said: "Whoever deliberately neglects prayer until its time is past, from noon to sunset and from sunset to midnight, has committed unbelief against the Great Allah. He shall be called upon to repent for three days, and if he refuses and says that neglecting prayer is not unbelief, he shall be beheaded. However, if he does pray and makes such a statement, then this raises a theological and legal question requiring the formulation of an independent judgement [based on the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, the Prophetic traditions and the consensus of the Islamic community]." Isḥāq also said: "And scholars who came after them from this era of ours [and onward] adopted the view that we have described. That is, all of them did so except those who differed with the [Islamic] community and followed various and sundry whims. As for these latter, they are people whose opinions carry no weight in Allah's scheme of things because of their having departed from the consensus of the community."

Abu ʿUbayd al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām al-Imām, who wrote a book on the subject of belief, says: "These are the names[14] of those who say that belief is saying and work, something which may increase or diminish."

Among the scholars of Makkah we have: ʿUbayd Ibn ʿUmayr al-Laythī, ʿAṭā' Ibn Abī Rabbāḥ, Mujāhid Ibn Jabr, Ibn Abī Mulaykah, ʿAmr Ibn Dīnār, Ibn Abī

[13] Mūsā Ibn Hārūn al-Ḥammāl (?–294 A.H.) was a scholar of ḥadith and a follower of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 271.]

[14] The majority of the names listed below have been previously identified.

Nujayḥ, ʿUbayd Allah Ibn ʿAmr, ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr Ibn ʿUthmān, ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Jurayj, Nāfiʿ Ibn Jubayr, Dāʿūd Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAṭṭār, and ʿAbd Allah Ibn Rajāʾ. Among the scholars of Madīnah we have: Muḥammad Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, Rabīʿah Ibn Abī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, Abu Ḥāzim al-Aʿraj, Saʿd Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn ʿAwf, Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd al-Anṣārī, Hishām Ibn ʿUrwah Ibn al-Zubayr, ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr al-ʿUmrī, Mālik Ibn Anas, Muḥammad Ibn Abī Dhiʾb, Sulaymān Ibn Bilāl, ʿAbd al-Azīz Ibn ʿAbd Allah (that is, al-Mājishūn), and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn Abī Ḥāzim. Among those of Yemen we have: Ṭāwūs al-Yamānī, Wahb Ibn Munabbih, Muʿammar Ibn Rāshid, and ʿAbd al-Razzāq Ibn Humām. And from Egypt and Syria we have: Makḥūl, al-Awzāʿī, Saʿīd Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, al-Walīd Ibn Muslim, Yūnis Ibn Yazīd al-Ayyūlī, Yazīd Ibn Abī Ḥabīb, Yazīd Ibn Shurayḥ, Saʿīd Ibn Abī Ayyūb, al-Layth Ibn Saʿd, ʿAbd Allah Ibn Abī Jaʿfar, Muʿāwiyah Ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ, Ḥaywah Ibn Shurayḥ, and ʿAbd Allah Ibn Wahb.

And among those who lived in the capitals and other cities of the [Arabian] peninsula we have: Maymūn Ibn Muhrān, Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm, Maʿqil Ibn ʿUbayd Allah, ʿUbayd Allah Ibn ʿAmr al-Ruqqī, ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Mālik, al-Muʿāfā Ibn ʿImrān, Muḥammad Ibn Salamah al-Ḥarrānī, Abu Isḥāq al-Fazārī, Mukhlid Ibn al-Ḥusayn, ʿAlī Ibn Bakkār, Yūsuf Ibn Asbāṭ, ʿAṭāʾ Ibn Muslim, Muḥammad Ibn Kathīr, and al-Haytham Ibn Jamīl. As for the scholars of Kūfah, they include: ʿIlqamah, al-Aswad Ibn Yazīd, Abu Wāʾil, Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr, al-Rabīʿ Ibn Khaytham, ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhʿī, al-Ḥakam Ibn ʿUtaybah, Ṭalḥah Ibn Maṣrif, Manṣūr Ibn al-Muʿtamar, Salamah Ibn Kuhayl, Mughīrah al-Ḍabbī, ʿAṭāʾ Ibn al-Sāʾib, Ismāʿīl Ibn Abī Khālid, Abu Ḥayyān, Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd, Sulaymān Ibn Muhrān al-Aʿmash, Yazīd Ibn Abī Ziyād, Sufyān Ibn Saʿīd al-Thawrī, Sufyān Ibn ʿUyyaynah, al-Fuḍayl Ibn ʿAyyāḍ, Abu al-Miqdām, Thābit Ibn al-ʿAjlān, Ibn Shabarmah, Ibn Abī Laylā, Zuhayr, Sharīk Ibn ʿAbd Allah, al-Ḥassan Ibn Ṣāliḥ, Ḥafṣ Ibn Ghayyāth, Abu Bakr Ibn ʿAyyāsh, Abu al-Aḥwaṣ, Wakīʿ Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, ʿAbd Allah Ibn Numayr, Abu Usāmah, ʿAbd Allah Ibn Idrīs, Zayd Ibn al-Ḥubāb, al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿAlī al-Jaʿfī, Muḥammad Ibn Bishr al-ʿAbdī, Yaḥyā Ibn Ādam, Muḥammad, Yaʿlā, and ʿAmr Banū ʿUbayd. Among the scholars of Baṣrah we have: al-Ḥassan Ibn Abī al-Ḥassan, Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn, Qatādah Ibn Daʿāmah, Bakr Ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Muznī, Ayyūb al-Sikhtiyānī, Yūnis Ibn ʿUbayd, ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAwn, Sulaymān al-Taymī, Hishām Ibn Ḥassān al-Dustuwāʾī, Shuʿbah Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Ḥammād Ibn Salamah, Ḥammād Ibn Zayd, Abu

al-Ashhab, Yazīd Ibn Ibrāhīm, Abu ʿUwānah, Wahīb Ibn Khālid, ʿAbd al-Wārith Ibn Saʿīd, Muʿtamar Ibn Sulaymān al-Taymī, Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Mahdī, Bishr Ibn al-Mufaḍḍal, Yazīd Ibn Zurayʿ, al-Muʾammal Ibn Ismāʿīl, Khālid Ibn al-Ḥārith, Muʿādh Ibn Muʿādh, and Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muqarrī. And among the scholars of Wāsiṭ we have: Hushaym Ibn Bashīr, Khālid Ibn ʿAbd Allah, ʿAlī Ibn ʿĀṣim, Yazīd Ibn Hārūn, Ṣāliḥ Ibn ʿUmar, and ʿĀṣim Ibn ʿAlī. As for those from the East, we have: al-Ḍaḥḥāk Ibn Muzāḥim, Abu Jamrah, Naṣr Ibn ʿImrān, ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Mubārak, al-Naḍr Ibn Shumayl, and Jarīr Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḍabbī.

According to Abu ʿUbayd, all of the above say that belief is a saying and a work, and something that may either diminish or increase. Moreover, this is the view held by Orthodox Muslims and that which we ourselves adhere to.

This view has been attributed more to Kūfan scholars than it has been to those in other groups, since in the beginning there were more Kūfans who held the Murjiʾite's views. The first to espouse such a view was Ḥammād Ibn Abī Sulaymān. This view was repudiated by Islamic scholars of Kūfah along with the Jahmite's views, and their denial of the divine attributes when such teachings began to spread out from Khurāsān. Moreover, criticism of the Jahmite's views by scholars in Khurāsān at that time was seen to a degree not encountered among those in whose countries this particular heresy had not appeared or even been heard of. As it is stated in one of the Prophetic traditions: "Within every heresy that plots against Islam and its adherents, Allah has those who speak in favor of Islam, so be certain to benefit from gatherings [of such persons], for mercy shall descend upon those who take part in them."

And if one of the views held by the pious ancestors was that both belief and hypocrisy may reside in a single individual, then it may likewise be said that in the same person one might find both belief and unbelief, though not the kind of unbelief that excludes one from the religious community. As Ibn ʿAbbās and his disciples have said concerning Allah's saying: "... And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the unbelievers" (5:44). This refers to a kind of unbelief that does not exclude one from the [Islamic] community. This interpretation was shared by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and other leading Orthodox Muslim scholars.

In his book *al-Salah, Prayer,* Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī said that people have differed over how to interpret Gabriel's saying. A group of our followers said that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Iman is to have belief in Allah." This ḥadith has a precise and deep meaning that the Murji'ites misunderstood. Their faulty explanation and interpretation of it was based on their lack of understanding of the Arabic language and the depth of the meaning of the words of the Prophet (pbuh), who was given a gift of knowing the deep sense of speech and its essence. However, the Prophet's (pbuh) saying, "Iman is to have belief in Allah," means that one must believe that there is only one Allah and believe in Him overtly and covertly, submit to Him and to His orders, and be determined to do what He commands. One must also avoid disdain, arrogance, and obstinacy; and if a person abides by what is mentioned above, he will win Allah's love and avoid his indignation. As for the phrase "and His Angels," this means that one ought to have Iman in those Angels that Allah named in His Book, as well as having belief that Allah has other Angels whose names and numbers are only known to Him Who created them. The phrase, "and His Books," means that one ought to have belief in the Books Allah mentions in His Book, which include the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, the Gospel, and especially the Book of Psalms; and that one must believe that Allah has other Books that He reveals to his Prophets, whose names and numbers are only known to the One who reveals them [i.e., to Allah]. One must have belief in the Furqān [one of the names of the Qur'ān], and one's Iman in it should differ from that of the other Books. For Iman in the other Books is limited to an acknowledgment of them with the heart and the tongue. But having Iman in the Furqān should not only be mere affirmation; in addition, it should include following the instructions mentioned therein.

His saying, "and His Messengers," means that one should have Iman in the Messengers whom He named in His Book and must have belief that Allah has other Prophets and Messengers whose names are unknown except to Him Who sent them. One must also have belief in Muḥammad (pbuh), which is different from belief in all other Messengers. Iman is to testify that Allah has sent all of them. But one's belief in Muḥammad must involve, in addition to this test, an assent and perseverance in obeying his message. This is done by performing all the obligations, abandoning all that is prohibited, doing what is lawful, pausing before taking any dubious action, and hastening to do good deeds. The Prophet's (pbuh) saying, "Resurrection Day," means that one should have Iman in resurrection after

death, in the accounting [by weighing one's deeds on the scales of reward and punishment], in Paradise and Hell, and in all of Allah's descriptions of Resurrection Day. Finally, the Prophet's (pbuh) saying, "One should have Iman in the predestination of both good and evil," means that one should trust that anything that happens to him could not have missed him, and anything that failed to happen to him could not have happened to him. Also one should not say: "If such and such had happened, such and such would have been the result." He [al-Marwazī] closes by saying: "This is the meaning of having Iman in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, and in Resurrection Day."

Chapter Twenty-One

The Difference Between the Five Pillars of Islam and Other Duties

What is in question here is whether the overt deeds that Allah has ordered include deeds in addition to the five pillars of Islam. Some said that these were the greatest and most prominent of the religious ordinances of Islam. They added that one's submission to Allah is completed by performing these religious duties; whereas if he abandons them, he feels that the bonds of his submission are being undone.

It has been verified that the Prophet (pbuh) regarded religion as a person's absolute submission to His Lord, which in turn became the duty of every person. Hence, every able individual must worship Allah purely by practicing the five pillars of Islam. Whatever is commanded apart from these five pillars is based on personal interests and is not considered a general duty. However, a sufficient number of people have been commanded to undertake actions such as striving for the Cause of Allah, commanding good deeds, and forbidding evil deeds, as well as other matters like ruling, leadership, and giving one's legal opinion on a certain matter, and so on. Or an action may be required of someone who is held responsible for fulfilling certain human rights. This obligation comes to an end when it is fulfilled [that is, when the aim is fulfilled, or if the person is proven innocent of committing a crime, or compensates for a crime committed by returning what was borrowed or taken by force or received in trust]. It may also involve restoring justice to people who have been unjustly deprived of life, property, or honor. All of these are human rights, and once they are restored, the obligations pertaining to them are brought to an end. In certain situations, these rights are the responsibility of some people but not others. It follows that not every able individual is ordered to perform all these duties as pure worship. Because of this, these duties are shared in common among Muslims, Christians, and Jews,

unlike the five pillars of Islam, which are particular to Muslims. This applies to doing good for one's kinsfolk and respecting the rights of wives, children, neighbors, partners, and the poor. It is also applicable to giving one's legal opinion on a certain matter, issuing legal judgments, being a leader, commanding good deeds and forbidding evil, and striving in the Cause of Allah. Such deeds are required of some people but not others in order to bring benefit and to keep away harm. Hence, these common deeds are considered an obligation for a sufficient number of people. On the other hand, those that are specific to the individual are considered an obligation for certain individuals. For example, Zayd's wife and his kinsfolk are not ʿAmr's wife and his kinsfolk. So the duty of Zayd differs from that of ʿAmr. It follows that not all able people are obliged to undertake any given action except for the five pillars of Islam. Unlike fasting the month of Ramaḍān, going on pilgrimage, praying the five prayers, and giving zakah, what is one person's obligation is not necessarily the obligation of someone else. And even though zakah is a monetary right (due certain people), giving it fulfills an obligation toward Allah, toward eight groups and its beneficiaries.[1] On this basis, one must have the intention to give zakah, and he cannot do it for someone else without first receiving his permission. Moreover, unbelievers are not asked to give it. However, the intention is not a condition for fulfilling human rights. That is, one can fulfill human rights on behalf of another without having his permission. Also, unbelievers are required to fulfill these rights. The rights due Allah, like acts of atonement, are required because of what humans have done; and by fulfilling them, punishment (for committing a sin) diminishes in the Hereafter. There are three types of obligations toward Allah: specific worship, such as prayers; specific punishment, such as limitations; and that which is similar to acts of atonement.

Likewise in the case of acts of penance related to the pilgrimage and vows made, such things are duties required of someone because of something he himself has done. As for zakah, it is an obligation that one owes to Allah on his property. Therefore it is said: there is no right to wealth except for zakah; that is, there is no obligation which is due on account of wealth other than zakah. However, there are

[1] The eight categories who are beneficiaries are listed in the following Qur'ānic verse. Allah says: "Alms are for the poor and the needy; and those employed to administer the [funds]; for those whose hearts have been [recently] reconciled [to truth]; for those in bondage and in debt; in the Cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer; a duty ordained by Allah. And Allah is All Knowing and All Wise" (9:60).

other obligations that result from causes other than money, such as expenses that must be paid on behalf of relatives, one's wife, one's slave, or one's livestock; the blood with which a clan is obliged to pay for its members; repayment of debts; the obligation to give of one's wealth to those struck by misfortune, to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked, all of which are collective duties; and other monetary obligations that arise from a temporary cause or circumstance. Obligations such as these become incumbent upon an individual only if he possesses the requisite wealth, just as the pilgrimage is incumbent only upon someone with the capacity to undertake the journey; hence, having a body is the cause of the obligation, while the capacity to undertake the action is another condition. In the case of zakah, wealth is both the cause of the obligation and the obligation itself, so that if there is no one in his country who deserves or needs it, he [the giver] takes it to another country where such a person does exist. For this is an obligation that is due to Allah Almighty. For this reason some Islamic jurists have said that one condition related to zakah is taklīf, *legal capacity,* since it is not incumbent upon either the child or the insane adult. However, the majority of the Companions of the Prophet, as well as others such as Mālik [Ibn Anas], al-Shāfiʿī, and Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], required that zakah be paid out of the wealth of children and the insane as well, since they considered the wealth of a child or an insane adult to belong to the same class as the wealth of all other people, besides the fact that their guardian could undertake the payment in their stead. For although they may be sound in body, they are not mentally competent to undertake this obligation, and it is on their behalf that such a guardian acts. The same applies to the tithe due on any land they own, even though it is only due to the eight [beneficiaries of the zakah]; and the obligation to distribute kaffārah, *atonement (i.e., expiatory gifts),* out of their wealth. As for the obligations to pray and fast, these are nullified if one is mentally incapable of performing such duties, particularly if one also considers a child's bodily weakness. Such a consideration does not apply to wealth, however, since a guardian may act as proxy for either a child or a mentally incompetent adult in fulfilling all their monetary obligations. But where their bodies are concerned, nothing whatsoever is required of them [with respect to monetary obligations].

Chapter Twenty-Two

The Concept of Iman and Related Issues

The Association of Belief with Work

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr [al-Marwazī] said: "They [the Murji'ites] deduced the meaning of Iman from what is mentioned in the Qur'ānic verses that regard prayer and other acts of obedience based on Iman, Islam, and religion." They also deduced what Allah says about Iblīs when he disobeyed Allah by refusing to make a single prostration to Adam. If this is true, then the question is, Why did Iblīs deny his Lord, even though he [Iblīs] said: ". . . Oh, my Lord! Because You have mislead me . . ." (15:39). And Iblīs also said to his Lord: ". . . Oh, my Lord! Give me then respite until the Day the [dead] are raised" (15:36). For these words indicate that he believed in the Resurrection Day and in his power to put all people [except the sincere and purified servants of Allah] in the wrong. Did Iblīs deny the power of Allah although he swore by His Glory ["by Your Glory I will put them all in the wrong"]? Did Iblīs become an unbeliever due to his refusal to make one prostration to Adam when he was ordered to do so by Allah? His unbelief was because he neglected an act, namely, to make one prostration, thus indicating that deeds are a condition of Iman. He [Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr] said that they also deduced the meaning of Iman from the story of Adam's two sons, in which Allah says: "And recite [Oh, Muḥammad] to them [the Jews] the story of the two sons of Adam [Hābīl and Qābīl] in truth, when each offered a sacrifice [to Allah]. It was accepted from one but not from the other. The latter said to the former: 'I will surely kill you.' The former said: 'Indeed, Allah accepts only from the righteous ones.' 'If you do stretch your hand against me to kill me, I shall never stretch my hand against you to kill you, for I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. Indeed, I intend to let you draw my sin on yourself as well as yours, then you will be one of the dwellers of the Fire, and that is the recompense of the wrong-doers.' So the

nafs, *self,* of the other encouraged him and made it appealing to him to murder his brother, he murdered him and became one of the losers" (5:27–30).[1] Muḥammad asked: "Did Adam's son [whose sacrifice was not accepted] deny His Lord? If so, then how could he have presented a sacrifice to Him? " Allah says: "Only those believe in Our Signs who, when they are recited to them, fall down in adoration and celebrate the praises of their Lord, nor are they [ever] puffed up with pride" (32:15). But He does not say: 'When they are recited to them they only confess it.' Hence he refutes the claim that Iman is mere lip confession. Allah also says: "Those to whom We have sent the Book recite it as it should be recited: they are the ones that believe therein . . ." (2:121). That is, they faithfully follow the Book.

Someone may ask: Is there evidence from the Sunnah that supports the idea that work is a condition for Iman in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, and in His Messengers? The answer would be: Indeed, there is. Many of the Sunnan and traditions indicate this. One of the ḥadiths concerns the delegation of ʿAbd al-Qays. There is also the ḥadith of Shuʿbah and Qurrah Ibn Khālid,[2] on the authority of Abu Jamrah,[3] on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, which was mentioned earlier, and whose words are: "I command you to have Iman in Allah alone." Then he [the Prophet] asked: "Do you know what belief in Allah alone is?" They replied: "Only Allah and His Messenger know." Then he said: "It is testifying to the fact that there is no god but Allah, that Muḥammad is His Messenger, establishment of prayer, giving zakah, fasting during Ramaḍān, and payment of one-fifth of the spoils that falls to your lot."

And he [Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr] mentioned many ḥadiths that require the inclusion of works in the definition of belief. For example, we have the ḥadith of Abu Dharr, in which the Prophet (pbuh), when asked about belief, recited the verse that says: "It is not al-birr, *piety,* that you turn your faces to the East and the West . . ." (2:177).

Then Abu ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr said: "Our friends differed over the interpretation of the Prophet's (pbuh) ḥadith, which reads: "The fornicator who

[1] The author of *Kitab al-Iman* cites the beginning portion verse 27 and then he cites the end of verse 30.Here we chose to provide the full text of the verse.

[2] Qurrah Ibn Khālid (?–154 A.H.) was a compiler of ḥadith and transmitted ḥadith from both al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī and Ibn Sīrīn. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 280.]

[3] Abu Jamrah, Naṣr Ibn ʿImrān (?–128 A.H.), was a compiler of ḥadith and died in Sarkhas. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 280.]

fornicates is not a believer so long as he commits it [fornication.]" Some say that by this ḥadith the Prophet (pbuh) meant that the Iman [but not the Islam] of such a person is negated. That is, he is no longer a believer, though he is a Muslim. Thus they differentiated between Iman and Islam. Moreover, they have stated that if someone commits fornication, he is not a believer even though he is a Muslim, using this as an argument in favor of their distinction between Iman and Islam. To support their interpretation, they used the following verse, which starts: "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe . . .'" (49:14), which differentiates between Iman and Islam. It has been said that Islam is a general concept referring to belief in the Oneness of Allah and secession from unbelievers' sectṣ, while Iman is a specific concept referring to works, and to belief in the Oneness of Allah. Proponents of this view support it by citing the story of Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, in which the Prophet (pbuh) gave [gifts] to some but not to all of a particular group of men. Among those who were not given [gifts] was a man whom Saʿd thought was the best believer of all of them. When Saʿd asked the Prophet (pbuh) why he did not give that man anything although he was a believer, the Prophet (pbuh) replied [three times]: ". . . or a Muslim." Then he added: "Indeed, I give to some people but not to others [although they are dearer to me than those to whom I gave] fearing that they will be in Hellfire with their faces down." Al-Zuhrī said: "Hence we conclude that Islam is kalimah (S͟hahādah), *verbal profession [that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger],* and Iman is works."

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr said: "It has been argued that someone who disobeys ceases to be a believer, and becomes only a Muslim." To support his argument he cited ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd's disapproval of someone who testified to his Iman by saying: "I am a believer," without adding the term, istit͟hānʾ, *exception (if Allah wills).* And so was the opinion of his followers and most of the scholars of Kūfah. Hence, Iman is dependent on future works. That is, one may do them or he may not. Therefore, he has to say: "if Allah wills," thereby indicating that works are a condition of Iman. Further support for their argument comes from a ḥadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, which says: "If the disobedient person turns away from his disobedience, Iman returns to his heart." They also cited accounts on the authority of al-Ḥassan and Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn, who used to say: "this is a Muslim" but would hesitate to say: "this is a believer." They so argued their position using the statement of Abu Jaʿfar, which was related to us by Isḥāq Ibn Ibrāhīm that we were informed by Wahb Ibn Jarīr Ibn Ḥāzim who said that my

father related to me, on the authority of Fuḍayl Ibn Yassār, on the authority of Abu Jaʿfar Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī, that he was asked about the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "A fornicator who fornicates is not a believer so long as he commits fornication." Abu Jaʿfar replied: "This is Islam," and he made a large circle with his hands and then said: "This is Iman," and made a smaller circle within the larger circle. Thus, if someone fornicates or steals, he will exit from the circle of Iman to the outer circle of Islam. However, this will not make him exit from the circle of Islam unless he commits unbelief in Allah. Other people use the argument based on what was narrated from the Prophet (pbuh), who said: "[Other] people became Muslims, but ʿAmr Ibn al-ʿĀṣ became a believer." It was related to us by Yaḥyā Ibn Yaḥyā[4] and Ibn Luhayʿah,[5] on the authority of Mashraḥ Ibn Hāʿān, on the authority of ʿUqbah Ibn ʿĀmir al-Juhanī, that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "[Other] people became Muslims, whereas ʿAmr Ibn al-ʿĀṣ became a believer."

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr mentioned that Ḥammād Ibn Zayd used to distinguish between Islam and Iman. He perceived Islam as general and Iman as specific. He also said that the examples of these people are the best ones to follow. For Allah made the name "believer" a name of mercy and praise that deserves Paradise, as is evident from the following verses. Allah says: ". . . And He is ever Merciful to the believers. Their salutation on the day they meet Him will be: Peace. And He has prepared for them a generous reward" (33:43–44). Allah also says: "Then give the glad tidings to the believers, that they shall have from Allah a very great bounty" (33:47); and ". . . Then give the glad tidings to the believers, that they shall have with their Lord the reward of their good deeds . . ." (10:2); and "One day you shall see the believing men and the believing women—how their light runs forward before them and by their right hands . . ." (57:12); and "Allah is the protector of those who have belief: from the depths of darkness, He will lead them forth into light . . ." (2:257); and "But give glad tidings to believers, men and women, that their portion is Gardens under which rivers flow . . ." (2:25).

He [Ḥammād Ibn Zayd] mentioned that Allah prepared Hell for major sinners, thus indicating that the name "believer" does not apply to them. On the other hand,

[4] Yaḥyā Ibn Yaḥyā, Abu Zakariyyah, was a famous religious scholar of ḥadith in Khurāsān. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 282.]

[5] Ibn Luhayʿah, ʿAbd Allah (?–174 A.H.), was a judge and a very well-known religious scholar in Egypt. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 282.]

Allah did not prepare Paradise for Muslims, hence indicating that the name Muslim still applies to major sinners (a major sinner is one who no longer has Iman but has Islam). This is one aspect of the difference between Islam and Iman.

One might have said to al-Marwazī's companions [mentioned previously] that in their claim that Iman, but not Islam, is negated of a major sinner so long as he commits a sin, Iman is not the opposite of unbelief. In response, they would say that unbelief opposes the essence of Iman, which has both a root and branches. Hence, unbelief cannot take root until Iman is uprooted. One might ask them: those of you whose Iman you claim the Prophet (pbuh) negated, do they still have any Iman? In reply they would say that yes, the essence of their Iman remains; otherwise they would be unbelievers. Did you not hear Ibn Masʿūd reproaching the one who said: "I am a believer," [simply] because he believed in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, and in His Messengers? Indeed, Ibn Masʿūd remarked that one does not deserve the name "believer," for a believer is someone who fulfills his religious obligations and refrains from committing sins that lead to Hell.

Some have said that Allah declares that the name "believer" applies to one who deserves compassion, mercy, and Paradise from Allah; moreover, when we know that we believe and trust in Allah, we know that we believe. And when we know that we have disobeyed Allah, we know that we deserve a penalty; and this is the opposite of reward with which Allah judges the believers with the name Iman. Then we realized that we believed and we held onto the name Iman, whose judgment Allah affirms in Paradise, and this Iman that purifies and praises is from Allah. Allah also forbids us to purify ourselves. He alone commands us to fear ourselves and He stipulates punishment when we rebel. Hence Allah makes it incumbent for those who commit grave sins to go to the Hellfire, and for those who follow His commands and seek His praise, blessings, and mercy to be rewarded by Paradise. Consequently, these are two opposing ordinances.

Someone may ask: Why did you not deserve the name "believers," although you claim that the essence of Iman remains in your hearts, which is the assent that Allah is just and what He says is true? In response they said that Allah, His Messenger, and Muslims [in general] name things by their associations. They call the fornicator a sinner, the slanderer a sinner, and the drinker of alcohol a sinner, but they do not call any of them believers or faithful, although they possess the essence of Iman. For they fear Allah, do not associate any others with Him, pray,

do not have sexual desires toward their mothers, and so on. It follows that they have the essence of Iman, which may be strengthened by increasing the number of the branches of Iman. However, they are called sinners rather than believers because they have committed sins.

Therefore they [the group of al-Marwazī's companions] do not call a fornicator a believer, but rather a sinner, although he has the essence of Iman in his heart. For Iman is a name that Allah attributes to believers and purifies them with it for which they are promised Paradise. Then we say Muslim and not "believer." They said: "If it were one of the Muslims whose heart contained neither Iman nor Islam, he would be one of the people who would enter Hellfire." However, when we found that the Prophet (pbuh) said that Allah says: "Take out of the Fire whoever has [in his heart] an atom's weight of Iman," we became certain that even the worst Muslim has some Iman [in his heart]. And when we found that the Islamic community judges him as a Muslim rather than as an unbeliever, who does not deserve Paradise, we ascertained that he was indeed a Muslim. So they have the consensus of opinion to apply the Islamic ordinances on them and they do not deserve to be called believers, since Islam is a proof that makes a person [who is a Muslim] different from all other communities. Consequently, he will not be designated to be part of any community other than the community of Islam. Thus, he will adhere to Islamic ordinances, and none of the ordinances of other communities will apply to him.

Someone might ask them [the group of al-Marwazī's companions]: "Why do you not say: 'I am an unbeliever, if Allah wills,' referring to whether you have achieved perfect unbelief, just as you say: 'I am a believer, Allah willing,' referring to whether you have achieved perfect belief?" In response they might say that this is because the unbeliever is a denier of the truth, whereas the root of a believer's belief is taṣdīq, *assent [of the truth]*. Denial has no beginning or end, since based on it, more facts are always anticipated. Belief, on the other hand, has its origin in taṣdīq, *assent,* while confession brings an anticipation of facts related to action on the basis of that which has been confessed and believed. This may be likened to two men who both owe a debt to a third man. The creditor asks one of the other two men to pay him what he owes him, and the man replies: "I owe you nothing," thereby denying his debt and acting in ingratitude. As a result, [the creditor] is no longer in a position to bring about the fulfillment of what [the other man] said, since he has denied his obligation and acted ungratefully. Then he asks

the other man to pay what he owes, and he says: "Yes, I owe you such and such." However, this acknowledgment is not something by which he will obtain what the other man owes until he has actually paid the debt. Hence, the creditor waits for him to fulfill what he has said through action, and to demonstrate the truthfulness of his acknowledgment by carrying out his promise. And if he were to make this acknowledgment, yet still not pay him what he owed, he would be, in effect, like someone who had acted in ingratitude toward him, neglecting to carry out his obligation. And in this way the two debtors would be alike. For the fulfillment of what he has said is for him to pay him what he owes him. If he pays part of it, he will have fulfilled part of what he promised, and will have made good on part of the debt that he acknowledged he owed. And whenever he pays any part of it, he will have fulfilled that much more of what he has pledged. It is the believer's duty to always carry out whatever obligations he acknowledges he has until the day he dies. And it is for this reason that we say: "I am a believer, Allah willing," whereas we do not say: "I am an unbeliever, if Allah wills."

UNBELIEF IN ALLAH'S GRACE AND THE UNBELIEF OF POLYTHEISM

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr said: "Another group of al-Marwazī's companions held a view something similar to that of the first group [mentioned previously]. However, they called him [the one who disobeyed Allah] a Muslim because of his having seceded from unbelievers' sects, his testifying that there is no god but Allah, and his belief in what Allah reveals. However, they did not call him a believer. Moreover, they claimed that even if they called him a Muslim, he was still an unbeliever: not one who disbelieves in Allah, but one who had become an unbeliever as a result of a lack of work. Furthermore, they said that the latter type of unbelief did not exclude him from the Islamic community." For it would be impossible for the Prophet (pbuh) to say: "A fornicator who fornicates is not a believer so long as he commits fornication," if unbelief were the opposite of Iman. That is, we should not call a disobedient person an unbeliever. When the Prophet (pbuh) negated such a person's belief by saying: "A fornicator who fornicates is not a believer so long as he commits fornication," while at the same time unbelief opposes Iman, and this is a contradiction. The only way to solve it is to say that unbelief is of two kinds: unbelief that removes someone from the Muslim community, and unbelief that results from neglecting good deeds. For unbelief

opposes Iman. But unbelief is of two different kinds: unbelief in Allah and what He says [which opposes confession and believing in Allah and His words], and unbelief that is attributed to committing a bad deed [which opposes the kind of Iman that is based on performing righteous works]. Do you not know what the Prophet (pbuh) stated? He said: "He is not a believer whose neighbor is not safe from his mischievous deeds." Some have said that if one does not believe then he is in a state of unbelief. That could only happen by way of work, since he does not believe in this aspect of work. Thus, he loses sight of what is an obligation upon him and commits a grave sin simply because of his diminishing fear of Allah, which is a result of his losing sight of the Glorification of Allah and His torment. Thus, removing Allah's Glorification from Iman also results in removing the source of fear and humility. The Prophet (pbuh) also swore: "He is not a believer whose neighbor is not safe from his mischievous deeds."

Moreover, some have reported from the Prophet (pbuh) that he said: "Cursing a Muslim is sin, and fighting against him is unbelief;" and "If someone should say to his fellow Muslim, 'You unbeliever!' when in fact he is not, then the speaker himself shall be rendered an unbeliever." Hence, by virtue of such a person's having fought against his brother, the Prophet (pbuh) called him an unbeliever, and because of his having called a fellow Muslim an unbeliever, he was himself declared an unbeliever. To say such a thing is more serious than fornication, stealing, or drinking alcoholic beverages. Someone might argue with us, claiming that if we called someone an unbeliever, then he must be judged to be the same as all those who blaspheme against Allah, such that we call upon him to repent and nullify all restrictions that would apply to him as a believer. For if he had blasphemed, then those regulations and restrictions pertaining to believers would no longer apply to him. This also means that the restrictions and regulations pertaining to believers are dropped from consideration when it comes to someone who has committed a major sin. But we have not gone as far [on this question] as some others have. Rather we say: "Belief has both a root and a branch, while against belief there stands kufr, *unbelief,* in every sense of the word." The root of belief is verbal testimony and taṣdīq, *assent,* while its branch is the perfection of good works, both those of the heart and those of the body. Against iqrār, *verbal testimony,* and taṣdīq of the sort that is the root of belief stands unbelief in Allah and what He says and abandoning taṣdīq in Him and for Him. As for belief of the sort that is action rather than mere verbal testimony, against it also stands unbelief,

though not the sort of unbelief that excludes one from the community of belief, but rather the kind of unbelief that consists of a failure to act. For action may also be considered a kind of belief, in addition to belief in the sense of a verbal testimony of Allah's existence and truth. Whoever abandons the belief that is acknowledgment of Allah's [truth and existence] is an unbeliever who is to be called upon to repent, while everyone who has abandoned belief in the sense of works [such as giving zakah, going on the pilgrimage, fasting during Ramaḍān, or failing to abstain from drinking alcohol, and committing sexual sin] has also lost a measure of belief; nevertheless, he is not to be called upon to repent, either in our view or in that of the Orthodox Muslims and heretics who, except for the Khārijites, have disagreed with us, saying that belief is both taṣdīq and works. Likewise, if we say that someone is an unbeliever in the sense of having failed to perform certain works, we are not required to call upon him to repent, nor do the restrictions pertaining to believers cease to apply to him, since he has not lost the root of belief, nor is he an unbeliever in the sense of someone who has repudiated Allah or His Revelation.

It is clear that knowledge of Allah is Iman and ignorance of Him is unbelief. Similarly, fulfilling one's religious obligations is Iman; however, ignorance of them before their being revealed is not unbelief. To clarify this, the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) testified that there is no god but Allah and Muḥammad is His Messenger, but they were ignorant of the obligations that were revealed to them later. Hence, their ignorance was not regarded as unbelief. When Allah revealed the obligations incumbent upon Muslims, they started practicing them. And whoever denies these obligations now is considered an unbeliever because he disbelieves what Allah says. But a Muslim who does not have knowledge of an obligation is not regarded as an unbeliever and ignorance in Allah, in any case, is considered unbelief both before and after they have been informed.

Some have also said that abandoning taṣdīq in Allah's truthfulness is considered unbelief. So is neglect of one's religious obligations, as well as taṣdīq in Allah, which made them obligatory. The latter is considered unbelief in terms of works. In support of this are accounts on the authority of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh), who spoke of "branches" of unbelief, besides the "root." These branches do not cause one to secede from the Islamic community. They also speak of

branches of Iman that correspond to works, the abandonment of which does not cause one to cease being a member of the Muslim community. An example is the comment of Ibn ʿAbbās on this verse. Allah says: "... If any do fail to judge by what Allah has revealed, indeed those are the unbelievers" (5:44). Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr said that it was related by [Muḥammad] Ibn Yaḥyā, on the authority of Sufyān Ibn ʿUyyaynah, on the authority of Hishām Ibn Jubayr, on the authority of Ṭāwūs, on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, who was once asked about the verse in which Allah says: "... If any do fail to judge by what Allah has revealed, indeed those are the unbelievers'" (5:44). He [Ibn ʿAbbās] said: "This refers to a degree of unbelief."

Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā related on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn Rāfiʿ, on the authority of ʿAbd al-Razzāq, that Muʿammar informed us, on the authority of Ibn Ṭāwūs, on the authority of his father, that Ibn ʿAbbās was asked about the verse mentioned above. He replied: "People such as those [mentioned in the verse quoted above] have a degree of unbelief, but not like that of people who have blasphemed Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers."

Isḥāq related to us that we were informed by Wakīʿ, on the authority of Sufyān, on the authority of Muʿammar, on the authority of Ibn Ṭāwūs, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, who said: "People such as those [mentioned in the verse quoted above] have a degree of unbelief, but not like that of people who have blasphemed Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers."

It was also related to us by Wakīʿ, on the authority of Sufyān, on the authority of Muʿammar, on the authority of Ibn Ṭāwūs, on the authority of his father, who said: "I asked Ibn ʿAbbās: Is the one who does not make judgments based on what Allah has reveals considered an unbeliever?" He replied: "He has a degree of unbelief in his heart, but not like that of someone who has blasphemed Allah, denying the Day of Judgment, Allah's Angels, His Books, and His Messengers."

It was related by Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā and ʿAbd al-Razzāq, on the authority of Sufyān, on the authority of [an unnamed] man, on the authority of Ṭāwūs, on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, who said: "This refers to a kind of unbelief that does not exclude one from the [Muslim] community."

It was related to us by Isḥāq, who said: "We were informed by Wakīʿ, on the authority Sufyān, on the authority of Saʿīd al-Makkī, on the authority of Ṭāwūs, who said: 'It is not an unbelief that excludes one from the [Muslim] community.'"

Isḥāq also related to us, saying: "Wakīʿ informed us, on the authority of Ibn Jurayj, on the authority of ʿAṭāʾ, who said: 'Some types of unbelief are less weighty than others, just as some types of injustice are less serious than others, and some types of sin are less grave than others.'"

The Two Kinds of Wrong

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr reported that they [al-Marwazī's companions] said that ʿAṭāʾ was correct in saying that an unbeliever may be called a wrongdoer, but so may a disobedient Muslim. Hence there are two kinds of wrongdoing, one of which excludes the one who commits it from the Islamic community, and the other of which does not. Allah says: "Those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong . . ." (6:82). He also says: ". . . For polytheism is indeed the highest wrongdoing" (31:13). Further support comes from the saying of Ibn Masʿūd when the verse, "It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong," was revealed. He said: "When this verse was revealed, the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) found it difficult to abide by it, and asked in astonishment: 'Oh, Messenger of Allah, who of us has not wronged himself?'" To this the Prophet (pbuh) replied: "It is not that. But have you not heard the saying of the righteous slave [Luqmān]: '. . . For polytheism is indeed the highest wrongdoing'" (31:13). This indicates that wrongdoing here means shirk, *polytheism.*

Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā narrated, on the authority of al-Ḥajjāj Ibn al-Minhāl, on the authority of Ḥammād Ibn Salamah, on the authority of ʿAlī Ibn Zayd,[6] on the authority of Yūsuf Ibn Muhrān and Ibn ʿAbbās, that ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb used to recite from the Qurʾān whenever he entered his home. One day when he was reciting the Qurʾān he came to the verse where Allah says: "Those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong . . ." (6:82) [until the end of the verse]. Suddenly he put his shoes on and rushed to Ubayy Ibn Kaʿb's house. He said: "Oh, Abu al-Mundhir, have you read the verse where Allah says? 'It is those who

[6] ʿAlī Ibn Zayd, Ibn Jadʿānā al-Tamimī (?-131 A.H.) was a well-known scholar of ḥadith . [*Kitab al-Iman* M.Z. pp. 291-92.]

believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong . . .' (6:82). Do not we do wrong?" To this Ubayy replied: "Oh, Commander of the Faithful, it is not as you suppose. Allah says: '. . . For polytheism is indeed the highest wrongdoing'" (31:13). Hence the word "wrongdoing" refers to shirk, *polytheism.*

Two Kinds of Sin

Furthermore, Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr said: "There are two kinds of sin. One that excludes one from the Islamic community, such that he is called an unbeliever, and one that does not." To clarify this, Allah mentions Iblīs by saying: ". . . He [Iblīs] fasaqa, *disobeyed,* the command of His Lord . . ." (18:50). This disobedience or fisq, *sin,* is regarded as unbelief. Of unbelievers Allah also says: "As to those who sin, their abode will be the Fire . . ." (32:20). What is intended here is the unbelievers, as indicated in the same verse. Allah says: ". . . Every time they wish to get away therefrom, they will be forced thereto, and it will be said to them: 'Taste you the Penalty of the Fire, which you used to deny'" (32:20). However, Allah calls al-qādhif, *the slanderer,* from among the Muslims by the name of fāsiq, *sinner,* without excluding him from Islam. Allah says: "And those who launch a charge against chaste women and produce not four witnesses [to support their allegations], flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after: for such men are sinners" (24:4). He also says: ". . . If anyone undertakes that duty [goes on a pilgrimage], let there be no obscenity, nor committing sin, nor dispute unjustly at the pilgrimage . . ." (2:197). Muslim jurists have interpreted the word fusūq, *sin,* cited in the last-mentioned verse to mean al-maʿāṣī, *acts of disobedience to Allah.*

They [al-Marwazī's companions] also said that since there are two kinds of wrong and two kinds of sin, so also are there two kinds of unbelief: one that does not exclude a person from Islam, and one that does. The same applies to shirk, *polytheism.* One type is shirk in the tawḥīd, *unity of Allah,* which excludes one from the community [of Muslims]; the other type is shirk in ʿamal, *work,* and does not exclude one from the community [of Muslims], and this is riyāʾ, *hypocrisy.* An example of the latter kind of shirk, *polytheism,* is given in the verse where Allah says: ". . . Whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as a partner" (18:110). What is intended

here is to pretend to do righteous works. The Prophet (pbuh) says: "al-ṭīrah, *gambling,* is shirk, *polytheism."*

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr said that these are two doctrines that are reported to have been taught by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, as well as other transmitters of prophetic traditions who were in agreement with his views. Al-Shālinjī Ismāʿil Ibn Saʿīd related that he asked Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal about the person who by his own volition and effort persists in committing grievous sins, yet at the same time does not neglect to pray, give zakah or fast during Ramaḍān. The question is: Does someone in such a condition persist [in being a Muslim]? He replied that such a person does continue [to be a Muslim]. As the prophetic ḥadith says: "The fornicator is not a believer as long as he commits fornication," which implies that he ceases to be a believer, but not to be a Muslim. We also have the related saying: "He who drinks wine is not a believer as long as he drinks it, and he who steals is not a believer as long as he steals," as well as the statement made by Ibn ʿAbbās concerning the following verse. Allah says: ". . . And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, those are the unbelievers" (5:44). I asked him [Ibn ʿAbbās]: "What kind of unbelief is referred to here?" To which he replied: "It is the sort that does not exclude one from the [Muslim] community, as some people's belief is weaker than or inferior to others. Likewise there are degrees of unbelief, until it reaches a degree about which there is no room for disagreement." And concerning the saying, "The fornicator is not a believer as long as he commits fornication," Ibn Abī Shaybah said: "Such a person does not have complete belief, but rather has a belief that is lacking." And he said: "I asked Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal about Islam and belief, to which he replied: 'Belief is both a saying and a work, while Islam is verbal testimony.'" And this is the view of Abu Khaythamah. Ibn Abī Shaybah said: "There is no Islam without belief, nor any belief without Islam."

We have already discussed the fact that these two entities are inseparable, even though neither is interchangeable with the other. Moreover, we have accounts by more than one person concerning the unanimous agreement among Orthodox Muslims and ḥadith scholars on the teaching that belief is both words and works.

In his book entitled *al-Tamhīd,* Abu ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr said: "Orthodox Muslims and jurists unanimously agree upon the fact that Iman is both words and

works, and that no work [is accepted] without a [good] intent." According to them, Iman increases and decreases. It increases through acts of obedience and decreases through acts of disobedience. Moreover, they [Orthodox Muslims] regard all kinds of obedience as Iman, except Abu Ḥanīfah and his companions, who argued that acts of obedience are not called Iman, for Iman is assent and verbal testimony. Some of his companions also add knowledge to the constituents of Iman.

He [Abu ʿUmar] added that all of the jurists [except Abu Ḥanīfah and his companions] of Ḥijaz, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, such as Mālik Ibn Anas, al-Layth Ibn Saʿd, Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Awzāʿī, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Isḥāq Ibn Rāhwiyah, Abu ʿUbayd al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām, Dāʾūd Ibn ʿAlī, and al-Ṭabarī, and whoever followed in their footsteps, said that Iman is words and works. It is a saying by the tongue, which is a verbal testimony, and belief in the heart and work with the bodily parts with good intent. They added that whichever of the religious obligations or desirable acts serve to help one obey Allah are considered part of Iman, which increases via obedience and diminishes via disobedience. Accordingly, sinners are regarded as imperfect believers. They have imperfect Iman because they committed grave sins. Support for this is found in the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "A fornicator who fornicates is not a believer so long as he commits fornication." This ḥadith regards a fornicator as an imperfect believer, but does not [totally] negate his Iman. This is because it is unanimously agreed that a fornicator, a thief, and a drinker of alcohol are permitted to inherit if they pray toward the Qiblah and accept the call of Islam. And also [they may inherit] due to their nearness to the believers who are not in the same condition as they are. Therefore, he [Abu ʿUmar] remarked that the majority of Mālik's companions regarded Iman and Islam as one thing.

He [Abu ʿUmar] said that the Muʿtazilites regard Iman as the sum total of all acts of obedience. Moreover, whoever fails to perform any act of obedience is considered a fāsiq, *sinner,* but not a believer or an unbeliever. This is the opinion of the Muʿtazilites, who believed in the manzilah bayna al-manzilatayn, *state in between.* He also said that Iman increases and decreases. It increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. This is also the opinion of the people of traditions and of jurists in the provinces. Ibn al-Qāsim related, on the authority of Mālik [Ibn Anas], that belief may increase, though he stops short of saying that

it may also decrease. However, ʿAbd al-Razzāq, Maʿan Ibn ʿĪsā, and Ibn Nāfīʿ[7] related on his authority that according to him, belief may either increase or decrease. This is in agreement with the views of ḥadith scholars within the Orthodox Islamic community. Praise be to Allah.

Then he [Abu ʿUmar] cited the arguments of the Murjiʾites and the Orthodox Muslims, after which he refuted the claim made by the Khārijites that those who disobey Allah [e.g., through fornication or theft] are unbelievers, either based on the criteria mentioned or based on inheritance, and he also cited the ḥadith of ʿUbādah: "He who gets something of that [inheritance] and then will be punished for it in this world; it is in the realm of penance." He [Abu ʿUmar] said that there are many degrees of Iman. Hence, an imperfect believer is not like a perfect believer. Allah says: "For believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts . . ." (8:2). For that reason Allah also says: "These are the true believers . . ." (8:4). Further support comes from the Prophet's (pbuh) ḥadith that reads: "A believer is he whom Muslims trust [with their persons and property]; whereas a Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are safe." And also he [the Prophet] said: "And the most perfect of believers in Iman are the best of them in morals." Naturally, in order for one to have perfect Iman, others must have a lesser degree of Iman.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "The closest bonds of Iman are love and hate for the sake of Allah;" and "No Iman [is accepted] from he who is untrustworthy." This indicates that there are types of Iman that are more perfect and trustworthy than others. In this regard, the following ḥadith, which was narrated by al-Tirmidhī and others, is mentioned: "Whoever loves, hates, gives, and prohibits for the sake of Allah perfects his Iman." Furthermore, Abu ʿUmar al-Ṭalamankī mentioned the consensus of the Orthodox Muslims, which states that Iman is words, works, good intent, and good undestanding of the Sunnah.

THE OPINION OF ABU ṬĀLIB AL-MAKKĪ ON ISLAM AND IMAN

Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī said that Islam has five pillars: to testify that there is no god but Allah, to pray, to fast during Ramaḍān, to give zakah, and to go on pilgrimage;

[7] Ibn Nāfīʿ, Abu ʿAbd Allah (?–186 A.H.), was a famous jurist of Madīnah and a disciple of Imām Malīk. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 293.]

whereas Iman has seven pillars: the five pillars mentioned in Gabriel's saying plus having belief in divine predestination and in Paradise and Hell. Both of these are mentioned in Gabriel's ḥadith, which will be cited later, in sh̲āʾa Allah.

Likewise, he said that belief is to believe in Allah's Name and His Attributes, to believe in Allah's Books and His Prophets, and to believe in the Angels and the devils. He means here, and Allah knows best, to distinguish between them [Angels and devils]. For indeed some people place them in one category. But they are distinguished according to their deeds, as human beings are distinguished as those who are righteous and those who are not. Also Iman is to believe in Paradise and Hellfire and that both of them were created before Adam and to believe in Resurrection after death and to believe in all categories of predestination; the good and the evil and the sweet and the bitter. These all emanate from Allah's Predestination, Will, and Wisdom. That is just from Him and Great Wisdom. He is the only One who knows the Unseen and the meaning of their realities.

Abu Ṭālib as well as others said that Iman is Islam, thereby denying the existence of differing degrees, and this is closer to the doctrine of the Murjiʾites. Others said that Islam is not Iman and those are the ones who introduce the concept of the opposite and the difference between the two, and this is close to the saying of the al-Ibāḍiyyah sect. This is a problematic question that requires a lengthy explanation. Indeed, the relationship of Islam to that of Iman resembles the relationship of the two parts of the testimonies, both in meaning and in principle. For indeed the testimony of the Prophet is different from the testimony of the Unity of Allah. Both of them are considered of equal prominence and they are both related to each other in principle and wisdom, and they bond together as one and so Iman and Islam are bonded together as if they form one unit. Thus there is no Iman for one who has no Islam, nor is there any Islam for one who has no Iman. For one must have some Iman in order to be a Muslim, just as a believer must have some Islam in order to fulfill his Iman. Thus a believer will not be derived of Islam and this indeed will affirm his Iman. For Allah commands good deeds as a condition for Iman. In the realization of this Allah says: "Whoever does good deeds, while he is a believer, his efforts will not be rejected . . ." (21:94). He also commands Iman as a condition for good deeds. Allah says: "But whoever comes to Him [Allah] as a believer, and has done good deeds, they have the highest ranks [in the Hereafter]" (20:75). Hence, whoever outwardly manifests Islam's deeds and does not believe in the inner essence of belief of the Unseen is

called a hypocrite, and his hypocrisy is the type that excludes him from the [Muslim] community. And whoever believes in the Unseen but does not act according to Iman and Islamic laws is called an unbeliever. His unbelief contradicts the Oneness of Allah. Finally, whoever believes in the unseen and does what the Messengers of Allah reported is called a believing Muslim. Otherwise, it would be possible for a believer not to be called a Muslim or for a Muslim not to be called a believer in Allah.

The people of the Qiblah agreed that every believer is a Muslim and every Muslim is a believer in Allah, in His Angels, and in His Books. Iman is to deeds as the heart is to the body: they are inseparable from each other. He [Abu Ṭālib] said that the likeness of Iman to works resembles the likeness of the heart to the body: they are inseparable from each other. No living body can exist without a heart and no heart can exist without a body. They are two separate entities and they are, in meaning and principle, considered two separate things. The likeness of them is similar to a seed, which has both an inside and an outside and yet is one. That is, we do not call it two seeds due to the variation in the characteristics of the outside and the inside. So are the deeds of Islam. Islam is the overt expression of Iman and Iman is the covert expression of Islam. And it is action of the parts of the body, and Iman is the inward aspect of Islam and it is part of the works of the heart.

It was also narrated from the Prophet (pbuh) that he said: "Islam is overt whereas Iman is in the heart." In another version: "Iman is a sirr, *secret thought,* in the heart." Hence, Islam is the works of Iman; and Iman is the beads of Islam. Hence there is no Iman without deeds and there are no deeds without binding. Similar to this are overt and covert knowledge, which are connected with the person who possesses them through acts of the heart and the acts of the parts of the body. This can be seen in the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "Indeed, works are achieved only through good intentions." Hence, no works, whether of the body or the heart, are accepted without good intentions. Namely, there is no deed fulfilled except with resolve and intention because the particle innamā, *indeed,* used in the above cited ḥadith, is used to affirm the realization of one thing and negate everything else. Thus he affirmed that the work of the parts of the body is considered behavior and the work of the heart is considered intention. For action is to belief what the lips are to the tongue. For speech cannot occur without both of them, since the lips bring the words together while the tongue produces outward speech, such that if either of these entities were taken away, no speech would be possible. Similarly,

if action were removed, there would be no belief. Therefore, when Allah enumerates the blessings that He bestows upon man through speech, He makes mention of the lips along with the tongue, as in the following verses. Allah says: "Have We not made for him a pair of eyes? And a tongue and a pair of lips?" (90:8–9). In other words, He is asking: "Did We not create human beings to be able to see and to speak?" He thus depicts the notion of speech by referring to the tongue and the lips, since the lips are the tongue's resting place, as it were. Moreover, he makes mention of the lips because the speech through which Allah's blessings were revealed could not have come about without them.

The relationship between belief and Islam may also be likened to a large tent or pavilion with an upper canopy that rises above ground level, tent pegs that hold it in place, and an upright post in the center. The tent is like Islam in that, just as Islam has foundations or "pillars" consisting of outward deeds performed by the body, the tent has pegs that hold the outer edges of the canopy in place, and a pole that stands upright in the center. This center pole may be likened to belief, for just as the tent cannot stand without the center pole, neither can Islam remain standing without belief. For the tent is in need of these pegs and poles, being unable to stand firm and upright without them, just as Islam, with its outward actions, may not remain standing without belief. And conversely, belief involves acts of the heart from which no benefit may come except through Islam with its accompanying works of righteousness.

Allah makes one thing the opposite of both Iman and Islam [if Iman and Islam did not have the same meaning, their opposites would not be one thing]. Allah says: "How shall Allah guide those who reject belief after they accepted it? . . ." (3:86); and ". . . Would He order you to unbelief after you have bowed your will [to Allah in Islam]?" (3:80). Hence He has made unbelief the opposite of both Iman and Islam. He [Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī] said that the Prophet (pbuh) pointed out that Iman and Islam are of the same kind. For example, in the ḥadith narrated by Ibn ʿUmar, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Islam is built on five [pillars]." He [al-Makkī] also said, with reference to the ḥadith of Ibn ʿAbbās, on the authority of the delegation of ʿAbd al-Qays, that they asked him [the Prophet] about Iman and he indicated the five pillars, thus pointing out that there is no covert Iman without overt Islam. Nor is there any overt Islam without covert Iman, for Iman and works are mutually connected. The possessor of just one of them [Iman or Islam] will not be of benefit to the possessor.

He [Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī] also said that in Gabriel's saying the Prophet (pbuh) differentiated between Iman and Islam regarding the details of the acts of the heart in accordance with the meanings that we have described. They are details of the acts of the body, which reflect the outward deeds and are not connected with differentiating, in meaning, between Islam and Iman. Hence, the ḥadith provides no evidence for the difference between the two concepts with regard to judgment. Abu Ṭālib added: "A worshiper of Allah can be a believing Muslim." Thus, what he mentioned concerning the secret of the heart is the description of the heart, and what he described overtly is the description of the body.

He [Abu Ṭālib] also said that the Islamic community agreed that if a worshiper of Allah believes in all that is mentioned in the sayings of Gabriel [about Iman], but does not act according to what is mentioned in it about Islam, he would not be called a believer. Neither would he be called a Muslim if he does all that is mentioned in the saying of Gabriel about Islam yet does not believe in what Gabriel said about Iman. And as is well known, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The [Muslim] community does not unanimously agree on what is false or misleading."

The Response to Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī for Not Making a Clear Distinction between Iman and Islam

By his last statement, Abu Ṭālib meant the consensus of the Companions and their followers. Legally speaking, such a person is not regarded as a believer. Nor is he called a Muslim if he denies some of the pillars, if he knows what the Prophet (pbuh) said but does not believe it, or if he does not have any considerable agreement with those who simply follow their own whims. Abu Ṭālib used to be well versed on their views. Therefore, I believe that this is what Abu Ṭālib meant in chapter 33 of his book, which deals with the details of Islam and Iman and explains the intentions of the heart from the point of view of the Orthodox Muslim community. The author opposes the views of Abu Ṭālib on two points. One is that the Muslims who deserve a reward must have the required and detailed Iman described in Gabriel's saying. The other point is that the Prophet (pbuh) used the name "believer" in some places and the word Muslim in others [e.g., the ḥadith narrated by Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ in which Saʿd said that the man is a believer; whereas the Prophet (pbuh) said: ". . . or a Muslim"]. For the traits of a Muslim

are different from those of a believer. Indeed, Muslim jurists have debated over the interpretation of the ḥadith narrated by Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ. They argued that, in this ḥadith, the Prophet (pbuh) did not say: "or a Muslim" in order to indicate that the man did not have the traits of a believer. If he had, he would have negated the possibility of perfect Iman for pious people who follow a middle course and are therefore rewarded Paradise without punishment. However, this is not the case. For both Orthodox Muslims and heretics unanimously agree that such a man is a believer. For if it were possible to negate one's Iman because of the presence of a better believer [than he], then the Iman of many believers and Prophets would be negated, which would make no sense at all.

Indeed, it has been mentioned that such a thing is not included in the sayings of Allah and His Messenger. However, this ḥadith refers only to someone who is a Muslim, but not a believer. Such a man ranks lower than the pious people of Paradise who follow a middle course, since their Iman is imperfect. They are so because they neglected an obligation for which they deserve Paradise if they are able to do it. And if they are not able to do so, they are still considered as imperfect believers. That is, even if such people enter Paradise, they are not like those who had total Iman and died before either knowing or performing detailed Iman. Such people, although they enter Paradise, are not treated like those who know and fulfill the obligations. However, it may be said that the righteous ones, the "people of the right hand," also have different ranks, as illustrated in the following ḥadith: "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak one, but both of them are good," and in the following verse. Allah says: "Not equal are those believers who sit [at home] and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the Cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives . . ." (4:95). In other words, although both weak and strong believers do what they are commanded to do, in Paradise the strong believer ranks higher than the weak one. Hence, it may be that by saying, "such a man does not have the traits of a believer," Abu Ṭālib meant that such a man's belief is not like that of a [true] believer or a righteous person who believes in and performs detailed Iman.

If it is said that one is a Muslim, but not a believer, it does not negate his Iman. Likewise, if it is said that one is not a jurist, a scientist, or of the people of reasoning, it would not negate his knowledge. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "If one of you paid an amount of gold equal in size to that of Mount Uḥud, he would neither

reach the rank nor even half of that of a [true] believer's Iman." There are many other ḥadiths that indicate that Iman varies among people. Even among those who will enter Paradise, there are some who do what they are commanded to and some who do what others, other than themselves, are commanded to do. For this reason, overt Islam was considered as belonging in the category of works, whereas Iman involves help and favor from Allah in the form of knowledge. Allah says: "But to those who receive Guidance, He increases the [light of] Guidance, and bestows on them their Piety and Restraint [from evil]" (47:17); and "Allah does advance in guidance those who seek guidance . . ." (19:76); and "It is He Who sent down Tranquility into the hearts of the believers, that they may add belief to their belief . . ." (48:4).

Such tranquility may not be accessible. But Allah, the Most Gracious, sends it down into a believer's heart as a reward for his righteous deeds. Allah says: ". . . But if they had done what they were [actually] told, it would have been best for them, and would have gone farthest to strengthen their [belief]. And We should then have given them from Our Presence a great reward. And We should have shown them the Straight Way" (4:66–68). Allah also says: ". . . Fear Allah and believe in His Messenger, and He will bestow on you a double portion of His Mercy: He will provide for you a light by which you shall walk [straight in your path] . . ." (57:28); and ". . . For such has written belief in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself . . ." (58:22). For this reason it is said that whoever acts in accordance with what he knows, Allah will provide him with the knowledge of what he does not know. The latter kind of knowledge is not accessible to Allah's servants, although they [the servants] are able to perform overt and covert works due to Allah's help and favor. Accordingly, works are of two kinds: one is within their capacity due to Allah's kindness and help, such as walking and sitting; the other is not. An example of the second kind of works is the support of Allah for one who obeys Him so that he becomes able to do what others cannot do. Indeed, the Qur'ān is full of such examples. Allah says: "Remember your Lord inspired the Angels [with the message]: 'I am with you: give firmness to the believers..'" (8:12). He also says: ". . . When you [believers] meet a force, be firm . . ." (8:45). Accordingly, Allah commands the believers to be firm. The Angels are inspired with this firmness so as to give it in turn to the believers.

RANKING PEOPLE WITH REGARD TO IMAN AND ALL ACTS OF OBEDIENCE

It may be that Iman is what some people are ordered to perform, and are dispraised if they do not. On the other hand, others who are unable to perform that part of Iman will not be dispraised for it. However, although the latter group of people have not neglected an obligation, Allah prefers the former, provided they fulfill that part of Iman. The same is applicable to overt deeds. In other words, some people are ordered to perform some overt deeds but others, because of their inability, are not. However, with regard to overt deeds, the unable, provided they have a true belief and intent to act, will be rewarded in the same way as the able will be rewarded if they do so. Support for this is found in the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "In Madīnah there are men who accompany you wherever you go, whether you walk in a street or cross an valley." To this the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) replied: "But they [the men] are in Madīnah." The Prophet (pbuh) added: "Indeed, they are in Madīnah because an excuse prevents them from being actually with you." Further support comes from the following saying of Allah. He says: "Not equal are those believers who sit [at home] and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the Cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit [at home] . . ." (4:95). Thus, He exempts from blame those [believers] who receive hurt.

Moreover, both *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* recorded that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever calls others to receive sure guidance will be granted the same reward as that of his followers; and whoever calls others to go astray will receive the same penalty as that of his followers."

Abu Kabshah al-Anmārī commented on this, saying: "They are alike in reward; and they are alike in penalty." Al-Tirmidhī recorded the same ḥadith as follows: "The world is for four types of people: a man who is granted knowledge and wealth because of which he fears Allah, knows that Allah has a right to it, and gives some of it to his relatives; such a man will be granted the highest rank; as for the man who is granted knowledge but not wealth, he sincerely said: 'If I had money, I would do like the first man,' hence, he will be rewarded as much as him; as for the man who is granted wealth [but not knowledge] because of which he neither fears Allah nor gives some of it to his relatives, such a man will abide in the lowest rank; finally, the man who is granted neither knowledge nor wealth

says: 'If I had money, I would do like the third man;' hence, he will receive as much punishment as the others."

The version of this ḥadith as reported by Ibn Mājah is: "This community may be likened to four different men. To the first of them Allah gave both wealth and knowledge; as a result, he demonstrated his knowledge by spending his wealth in the proper way. To the second man Allah gave knowledge, but not wealth. Thus, he said: 'If I had what this other man has, I would do the same thing with my wealth.'" Commenting on this, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Therefore, both men will receive an equal reward. The third man was given wealth without knowledge, as a result of which he squandered his money, spending it foolishly. As for the fourth man, Allah gave him neither wealth nor knowledge; therefore, he said: 'If I had that man's wealth, I would do the same as him.' Consequently, they will bear the same punishment."

If two persons possess similar degrees of Iman in their hearts, they may be considered alike in their Iman, even if one of them undertakes physical actions that the other cannot because of his inability to do so, as in the following tradition: "The believer's strength is in his heart, while his weakness is in his body, whereas the hypocrite's strength is in his body, while his weakness is in his heart." Therefore the Prophet (pbuh) said: "A strong man is not he who possesses a strong body to fight with; rather, he is the one who is able to suppress his passion when angry." The Prophet also said: "I dreamt that I went to the qulayb, *well,* to get some water and [Abu Bakr] Ibn Abī Quḥāfah took the pail and lowered it into the well; when he had filled it once then twice, he felt tired [may Allah forgive him]. When ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb took the pail from him [Abu Bakr], it looked as if it were a big pail. And I did not see such a wonderful man among persons and he went on serving water to the people until they were fully satisfied and then they went to their resting place." In this ḥadith the Prophet (pbuh) remarked that Abu Bakr was weaker than ʿUmar and that ʿUmar was [physically] stronger than him [Abu Bakr]. Ibn Masʿūd also said: "We became stronger the moment ʿUmar converted to Islam." However, there is no doubt that Abu Bakr's Iman was stronger than that of ʿUmar, and that the power of Iman is stronger and more perfect than the power of work. For the one who possesses Iman the reward of the work of the others will be granted for him. What ʿUmar did during his lifetime is similarly recorded for Abu Bakr, since he succeeded him in the Caliphate.

It was recorded that the Iman of the Prophet (pbuh) weighed more than that of the whole [Muslim] community, as did that of Abu Bakr and ʿUmar. And during the life of the Prophet (pbuh) as well as after his death, ʿUmar used to be granted Iman and knowledge through Abu Bakr, who would call and help him to do righteous deeds. Hence, Abu Bakr would get as much reward as ʿUmar. For the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever outfits a striver for the Cause of Allah is considered as he who strove; and whoever [sincerely] stays with the family of a striver for the Cause of Allah is considered as he who strives; and whoever has guided others to the good will get as much reward as that of a follower of that guidance." The Prophet also said: "Whoever fed a fasting person will get as much reward as he who fasted."

Moreover, it was narrated on the authority of al-Tirmidhī that: "Whoever offers condolences to a hurt man will get as much reward as that of the person who was hurt." There are many other sayings that indicate that if two men seem alike with regard to their overt deeds, they may differ with regard to the Iman in their hearts. If this is the case, he who has stronger Iman in his heart will rank higher than he who has weaker Iman in his heart. For this reason, Allah favored some prophets over others, even if those favored [i.e., the best] were unable to do [overtly] as much as the unfavored [i.e., the good]. For example, Allah favors the Prophet (pbuh), whose Prophethood lasted for more than twenty years, over Noah, whose Prophethood lasted for one thousand years less fifty. Allah also favors the community of Muḥammad, who worked from the ʿAṣr prayer until the Maghrib prayer, over other communities who worked from the start of the day until the Ẓuhr prayer and those who worked from the Ẓuhr prayer until the ʿAṣr prayer—by granting the community of Muḥammad double the reward of the other communities. This is due to the fact that the Iman of [Muḥammad's community] in their hearts was more perfect and excellent than that of the other communities, although the latter did more righteous works than the former. So it is with all those whom Allah favors over others.

Allah graciously grants them the means by which they can come to merit His favor. Allah may grant some people the ability to know, or to be patient, sincere, sure, and so on, by virtue of which He favors them over others with regard to their reward. Allah says: "A group of the People of the Book says: 'Believe in the morning what is revealed to the believers, but reject it at the end of the day; perchance they may [themselves] turn back.' 'And believe no one unless he

follows your religion.' Say [Oh, Muḥammad]: 'True guidance is the guidance of Allah: [fear you] lest a revelation be sent to someone [else] like unto that which was sent unto you? Or that those [receiving such revelation] should engage you in argument before your Lord?' Say [Oh, Muḥammad]: 'All bounties are in the hand of Allah . . .'" (3:72–73); and Allah also says: ". . . Allah knows best where [and how] to carry out His Message . . ." (6:124); and "Allah chooses Messengers from Angels and from men . . ." (22:75); and ". . . He forgives whom He pleases, and He punishes whom He pleases . . ." (3:129).

In some verses of the Qur'ān, Allah indicates the reasons behind His forgiveness as well as those behind His punishment. He also provides sustenance without limits to whom He pleases. He also indicates that He may grant wealth to whom He pleases.

If there is Iman that some people are able to attain while others are not, then this Iman is what Allah favors, and the former group is favored over the latter. And it is this Iman which is negated of the latter group for Iman is what is in the heart, and differs widely from one person to the next. This negation is not accompanied by dispraise. For dispraise occurs as a result of either abandoning an obligation or committing a sin. However, with regard to what Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī mentioned, it is said that such people are Muslims, but not believers in some respects; and are believers in others. Accordingly, Iman is negated for the person who fails to achieve the perfect Iman. Such Iman is negated for him, although it is neither obligatory nor desirable where he is concerned; it is, however, required from others. For example, the increase of one's worship at midnight may be required of some people but not others. Moreover, it may even be undesirable for someone who is unable to do that. However, such a matter is not addressed by the Legislator [the Prophet]. Indeed, what the Prophet (pbuh) declared is that negation of Iman requires dispraise. For it will not be negated for anyone unless he commits a sin, which indicates that the Prophet's (pbuh) saying, ". . . or a Muslim," was due to this person's having neglected outward and inward obligations, which is the view of the general public.

Then there is a group of people who said that one might be a hypocrite without Iman. They also said that the desert Arabs, mentioned previously, are hypocrites with no Iman. This opinion was supported by others, such as Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr. The majority said that these desert Arabs were not hypocrites whose deeds

were not accepted. Although they possessed a kind of hypocrisy, they also had taṣdīq, because of which their righteous deeds, deeds that were done for the Cause of Allah were accepted. Therefore Allah considers them Muslims, saying: ". . . That He has guided you to the belief, if you be true and sincere" (49:17). The same thing applies to the thief and the adulterer, who are said to have no Iman, although they have taṣdīq. This is the most correct of the three views.

Response to the View of Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī

Abu Ṭālib considered the person who is blameworthy for having neglected some duty to be among those whose hearts have been [recently] reconciled [to truth] and who have been given nothing. Moreover, he considered such a person to be a believer whose belief was inferior to that of others. As for the majority, they said that if someone is confirmed as a Muslim without being confirmed as a believer, he is blameworthy, but not simply because someone else is superior to him. As the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The most perfect believers are those with the best character." However, he did not deny Iman to those who rank lower than the perfect believers. Allah says: ". . . Not equal among you are those who spent and fought, before the conquering [of Makkah]. Such are higher in degree than those who spent and fought afterwards. But to all, has Allah promised the best [reward] . . ." (57:10).

Thus, in the verse above, He affirmed the Iman of both the favored and the less favored and this is agreed upon by Muslims. So our Prophet (pbuh) said: "If the ruler has judged correctly he receives two rewards, but if he has judged wrongly he receives one." He also said to Saʿd Ibn Muʿā<u>dh</u>, when he made a judgment in the Banū Qurayẓah case: "You have judged as a king rules from above seven firmaments." Moreover, he [the Prophet] used to say to military leaders: "If you laid siege to any fort and they ask you to judge them as Allah wishes, do not do that, but judge them as you and your companions see fit [because people's judgment could be right or wrong, but Allah's judgment can never be anything but right], so if he [the judge] is correct, he will receive two rewards for being in agreement with Allah's judgment. However, if he is mistaken, he will only receive one reward." These three sayings are reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Sulaymān (may Allah be pleased with him) said that: "I asked Allah

to enable me to make judgments that agreed with His judgment [i.e., for the ability to judge correctly]."

These tests and others prove what the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) and their Successors agreed on: that one of two persons may be given ijtihād, *reasoning ability,* by Allah. As a result, he receives knowledge that the other does not, as a result of which he receives two rewards. The mistaken one receives one reward, but he is not considered a sinner. The knowledge of the first person, and his overt and covert deeds based on it, bring about an increase in his Iman. Moreover, this Iman is his duty, since he is able to achieve it. However, the other is not obliged to have it since he is not able to achieve it. Hence, the first person has been favored with an obligatory Iman, but it is not a must for the other, who is unable to attain it.

This is the state of the whole Muslim community with respect to problems of knowledge. If one person is given knowledge of the truth in a certain matter, while another person seeks to understand it but is unsuccessful, both are praised, rewarded, and considered believers. Allah gives the first person some Iman, which it is his duty to have. But the mistaken individual does not deserve punishment. However, if he were the first person and did the same thing, he would be punished. Likewise, Allah especially favors our Prophet's (pbuh) community with what a law would be, and if we abandoned anything in it then we would deserve punishment and dispraise. The Prophets before Muḥammad are not to blame for neglecting this law [since they had not yet received it]. But Allah favors Muḥammad (pbuh) and his community over other prophets and other communities [without directing blame to any of the other prophets and their followers].

If a human being is only obliged to have that belief of which he is capable, and if he does what he is asked to, he merits Paradise. If this man is called a Muslim, but not a believer, he must be the one who is promised Paradise as the desert Arabs were, and like the man whom our Prophet (pbuh) spoke of, saying, ". . . or a Muslim," and anyone of whom Iman is negated such as a fornicator, a drunkard, a thief, or someone whose neighbor is not secure from his injurious conduct, or who does not desire for his brother [in Islam] what he desires for himself; but this is not so. Allah promises Paradise only to believers, not Muslims, although He considers Islam the only religion that is to be accepted from people. Allah says: "Allah has promised to believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers

flow . . ." (9:72). So He confines it to either absolute Iman or that which is bound to righteous deeds. Allah says: "Those who have belief and do righteous deeds, they are the best of creatures. Their reward is with Allah: Gardens of Eternity, beneath which rivers flow . . ." (98:7–8); and "But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is Gardens, beneath which rivers flow. Every time they are fed with fruits therefrom, they say: 'Why, this is what we were fed with before . . .'" (2:25); and "Those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and establish regular prayers and regular charity, will have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (2:277); and "But to those who believe and do righteousness, He will give their [due] rewards, and more, out of His Bounty . . ." (4:173); and "Then those who believe in Allah, and hold fast to Him, soon will He admit them to Mercy and Grace from Himself, and guide them to Himself by a straight Way" (4:175); and "But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, we shall soon admit to Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath their eternal home: Therein shall they have spouses pure: We shall admit them to shades, cool and ever deepening [Paradise]" (4:57); and ". . . Allah's promise is the Truth and whose words can be Truer than those of Allah's?" (4:122); and "As to those who believe and work righteousness, Allah will pay them [in full] their reward; but Allah loves not those who do wrong" (3:57); and "To those who believe and do deeds of righteousness has Allah promised forgiveness and a great reward" (5:9); and ". . . So those who believe and do righteous deeds, upon them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve" (6:48); and "But those who believe and work righteousness, no burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear, they will be Companions of the Garden, therein to dwell [forever]" (7:42). And there are many other Qur'ānic verses that express the meanings above.

So the promise of entering Paradise and receiving mercy in the Hereafter and deliverance from punishment is tied to absolute Iman, and Iman is accompanied by righteous deeds. And as we have mentioned, absolute Iman includes what Allah and His Messenger commanded, and is not limited to the name Islam. Some claim that if one has all the Iman he can attain, yet is not able to know its details, he may be called a Muslim, but not a believer; nevertheless, he will still enter Paradise. Paradise is merited by anyone who is called a Muslim, even if he is not called a believer. However, this is not the case; for Paradise is not tied to anything except Iman. This is consistent with the claim of some that not every Muslim is among

the believers whom are promised Paradise. If he were, then the promise of Paradise would be bound to one's being a Muslim just as it is bound to his being a believer, and to his being righteous and pious. Allah says: "As to the Righteous, they will be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers" (54:54); and "As for the Righteous, they will be in Bliss" (82:13); and "Behold! Indeed on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve; Those who believe and [constantly] guard against evil; For them are Glad Tidings, in the life of the Present and the Hereafter: no change can there be in the Words of Allah. This is indeed the supreme Success" (10:62–64). Since the word Islam was not used in this manner, we know that the reality it refers to is not necessarily tied to Iman as it [Iman] is tied to the words "righteous" or "pious," and that the word Muslim includes those who are threatened with punishment although Allah rewards them for their obedience, such as having Iman in his heart. They have some hypocrisy by which they deserve punishment, but they will not be in Hell forever; since if they have some Iman in their hearts, the like of the weight of an atom or more, Allah takes them to Paradise after they are punished.

FURTHER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ISLAM AND IMAN

Thus, major sinners are imperfect believers, and if any one of them has a degree of hypocrisy in his heart, he will be punished if Allah does not forgive him, but he will not dwell in Hell forever. So major sinners are Muslims but not [true] believers. But they [major sinners] show hypocrisy in their deeds rather than in belief, since hypocrisy in belief would make them unbelievers. So, since they were closer to being unbelievers than believers, they were called hypocrites. They are included in the category of Muslims according to worldly judgments just as the outright hypocrites are, since they have Iman and are included in Allah's call: "Oh, you who have believed!" His is a command to do what benefits them and abandon what hurts them, and they need this. Also, if the Iman which they have includes them in the group addressed as, "Oh, you who have believed!" then no one objects; otherwise, they would be in a worse state than the sheer hypocrite. The hypocrite is addressed on the basis of his deeds, which benefit him in this life and cause him to be assembled along with believers on the Day of Resurrection, being distinguished thereby from people of other religions just as he was in this life. However, at the Hour of Truth, they will be separated. Allah says: ". . . So a wall

will be put up between them, with a gate therein. Within it will be Mercy throughout, and without it, all alongside, will be [wrath and] punishment! [Those without] will call out: 'Were we not with you?' [The others] will reply: 'True! But you led yourselves into temptation; you looked forward [to our ruin]; you doubted [Allah's promise]; and [your false] desires deceived you in respect of Allah. This Day no ransom will be accepted of you, nor of those who rejected Allah. Your abode is the Fire: that is the proper place to claim you: and an evil refuge it is!'" (57:13–15). Allah also says: "The hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire: no helper will you find for them; except for those who repent, do righteous deeds, hold fast to Allah, and purify their religion as in Allah's sight: if so they will be [numbered] with the believers. And soon will Allah grant to the believers a reward of immense value" (4:145–46).

So if the servant of Allah does righteous deeds [for the cause of Allah], this is the Islam that is Allah's religion, and such a person has enough Iman to be assembled with believers on the Day of Resurrection. If he committed sins, he is punished and taken out of the Fire if he has even a mustard seed's weight of Iman, or even if he has hypocrisy with respect to deeds, not belief. Allah says: ". . . They will be [numbered] with the believers. And soon will Allah grant to the believers a reward of immense value" (4:146). So He does not say that they are believers only by virtue of this, since having belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers is obligatory for having Iman, and they do have this belief. However, he mentions righteous deeds and loyalty to Allah and says: "They will be [numbered] with the believers." Hence, they are treated as believers.

Allah differentiates among believers; so he who achieves the required Iman deserves reward, but he who has some hypocrisy and has committed major sins is among those threatened with punishment. His Iman will benefit him and remove him from the Fire, even if he has a mustard seed's weight of Iman. However, he does not deserve the absolute Iman on which depends the promise of entering Paradise without first being punished. To summarize, there are people who have a degree of unbelief [or hypocrisy] as well as a degree of Iman. As Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal said, such people are called Muslims.

Thus, a human being may have some degree of Iman and some degree of hypocrisy, or he could be a Muslim who is guilty of [minor] unbelief, which does not exclude him from Islam completely, as Ibn ʿAbbās and others have said. This

is what Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal said concerning the thief, the drunkard, and so on, whom our Prophet (pbuh) considered to be Muslims but not believers. Reference is made to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah to demonstrate that such a person has Iman but not Islam. A man could be a Muslim and have unbelief that does not take him away from the Muslim community since unbelief is of two kinds: that which excludes one from Islam, and that which results from neglect of deeds, which does not exclude him from Islam, but causes him to be a mere Muslim rather than a believer. This is how Ibn ʿAbbās and his companions interpret Allah's saying: "... If any do fail to judge by what Allah reveals, those are the unbelievers" (5:44). They say that unbelief that does not exclude one from the Muslim community is unbelief of a lesser degree than unbelief, sin of a lesser degree than sin, and wrongdoing of a lesser degree than wrongdoing.

This is also cited by al-Bukhārī in the first chapter of his *Ṣaḥīḥ,* entitled *The Book of Belief,* in which he indicates that deeds are part of Iman. Here he includes the ideas of Orthodox Muslims as well as refutations of the Murji'ites as he was a supporter of the Sunnah and the Orthodox Muslims who in turn sincerely followed the Companions of the Prophet and their Successors.

Further Aspects That Differentiate between Islam and Iman

Muslim scholars agree that the name Muslim may be overtly applied to hypocrites, since outwardly they have surrendered, prayed, paid zakah, gone on pilgrimage, and fought in the same manner that the Prophet applied the tenets of outward Islam upon them. They also agree that he who does not have any Iman [who is a hypocrite in his belief] is as Allah says: "The hypocrites will be in the lowest darak, *level,* of the Fire ..." (4:145). There are two different readings of the word darak (or dark) and they both mean *level.* Abu al-Ḥusayn Ibn Fāris[8] says that Hell has darakāt, *levels,* while Paradise has darajāt, *grades.* Al-Ḍaḥḥāk says that the word darajāt means *grades on top of each other,* while darakāt means *steps leading downward.* Accordingly, Muslims differ in their grades. For example, the highest grade in Paradise is occupied by our Prophet (pbuh) who said: "If you hear a call to prayer [adhān], say what the caller says, then ask Allah to give you al-

[8] Abu al-Ḥusayn, Aḥmad Ibn Fāris (?–390), was a well-known grammarian. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 310 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 1, p. 184.]

wasīlah, which is the highest grade in Paradise, which should only be for one of Allah's slaves, and I hope to be that slave. Whoever asks Allah to give him al-wasīlah, I will intercede for him on the Day of Resurrection." His [the Prophet] saying: "I hope to be . . ." is like his saying: "I hope to be the most Allah-fearing and righteous among you and to be the most knowledgeable with His ḥudūd, *divine ordinances,"* and there is no doubt he is the most fearing member of the Muslim community and the most knowledgeable about Allah's divine ordinances.

He [the Prophet] also said: "My prayer of intercession for my people will remain hidden until the Day of Judgment, and it will be for every one who died without associating anything with Allah." He also said: "I hope you will constitute half of the inhabitants of Paradise," and other such sayings which Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others have cited in support of the view that whenever one says, "I am a believer," he must add, in s̲h̲ā'a Allah, *if Allah wills,* as the Prophet does in this ḥadith.

What is meant here is that our Prophet (pbuh) is the best of believers and occupies the highest grade in Paradise. Hypocrites, however, are in the lowest level of the Fire even though they were Muslims in this life and were outwardly judged to be Muslims based on overt laws and legislations. One who is a hypocrite with respect to his deeds is called a Muslim, but if his hypocrisy exceeds his Iman, he does not deserve the name "believer," rather, he deserves the name "hypocrite." If one's hypocrisy supersedes Iman then he does not deserve to be called a believer but rather he is more deserving to be called a hypocrite. A person whose complexion is a mixture of white and black, but his blackness supersedes, will be more deserving to be called black rather than white. Allah says: ". . . They were that day nearer to unbelief than to belief . . ." (3:167). But if he has more Iman than hypocrisy, he is threatened with punishment [i.e., he has committed major sins], and is not among those believers who are promised Paradise. This is an argument for what Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr mentions on the authority of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal; however, I have not found it in Aḥmad's writings, and neither is it mentioned by al-K̲h̲allāl or any of his followers. According to Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr and others, Aḥmad said: "Whoever commits these four major sins [fornication, theft, drinking alcohol, and plundering] or something more serious than these four is called a Muslim, but not a believer." The one who commits minor sins is called a believer but not a perfect believer. Aḥmad said that when the Prophet (pbuh) negated the Iman of a major sinner, he also negated it of himself. Moreover, he only negated

it of major sinners [as in his saying: "The adulterer who commits adultery is not a believer when he commits adultery"]. Thus, the believer who commits minor sins, which may be erased by doing righteous deeds, is an imperfect believer. As for someone who fulfills the required Iman but mixes his righteous deeds with minor sins, he occupies a lower grade in Paradise than one who does not commit such sins.

Aḥmad's refusal to attribute Iman to major sinners is based on the Prophet's (pbuh) refusal to do so. Although such sinners have the essence of Iman and taṣdīq, they have committed sins that takes their Iman away from them. The servant of Allah can have both Iman and hypocrisy in his heart, as well as both Iman and unbelief. But the absolute Iman is that belief whose possessor deserves the promise of Paradise.

Can an Individual Have Both Iman and Hypocrisy?

The Khārijites, Muʿtazilites, Jahmites, and Murjiʾites, which include the Karrāmites and other subsects, say that Iman and hypocrisy cannot be found together at the same time in the same servant of Allah. Some of them claim consensus on this, as does Abu al-Ḥassan. But in so doing they are mistaken and oppose the Book, the Sunnah, and the traditions of the Companions and their Successors, as well as sound reasoning. Moreover, the Khārijites and the Muʿtazilites have generalized this corrupt view by claiming that one person cannot have both obedience deserving reward and disobedience deserving punishment at the same time. He cannot be praised for some characteristic and condemned for another, or loved by one and damned by another. They cannot imagine that the same person might enter both Hell and Paradise. Rather, he who enters one does not enter the other, so they deny the possibility of coming out of Hell or receiving the Prophet's intercession for those who deserve Hell. (In this they oppose the Prophet's previous statement about his intercession.) It is said that the vast majority of the Murjiʾites agreed with them; however, they [the Murjiʾites] say that major sinners do enter Paradise and do not enter the Fire.

The Orthodox Muslim community, the Companions, their Successors, Islamic sects such as the people of the ḥadith, Muslim jurists, and theologians from such

sects as the Murji'ites and Karrāmites, Kullābites, Ash'arites, and Shī'ites [both Murji'ites and non-Murji'ites] say that someone may be punished in Hell by Allah and then be allowed to enter Paradise, as the authorized ḥadiths clearly indicate. All these groups were in agreement concerning the destination of the person who committed evil deeds for which he deserved to be punished, and did righteous deeds for which he merits Paradise. However, these groups disputed over what he should have been called. For example, the Murji'ites [whether Jahmites or non-Jahmites] said that he was a perfect believer since they defined Iman as mere acceptance or belief, without deeds. However, the Orthodox Muslim community said that he was not a perfect believer; otherwise he would have been punished. He also lacked birr, *piety,* and taqwā, *righteousness,* so how could he be called a believer? Here we have two different points of view. The correct one is: If the question has to do with freeing a slave to atone for sin, he is a believer. The answer is the same if one asks if he is included in the address to believers.

However, if one asks how he will be judged in the Hereafter, it is said that such a person is not among the believers who are promised Paradise. Nevertheless, he also has Iman, which prevents him from remaining forever in Hell, and by virtue of this Iman he can enter Paradise later; if Allah has not forgiven him, he is punished in the Fire. Therefore, some have said that he is a believer based on his Iman and a sinner based on his major sins; or he may be considered an imperfect believer. Those Orthodox Muslims and Mu'tazilites who do not call him a believer [although they oppose the Mu'tazilites' view that he has the essence of Iman, through which he will enter Paradise] say that calling someone a sinner precludes calling him a believer. Allah says: ". . . Ill-seeming is a name connoting sin [to be used of one] after he has believed . . ." (49:11); and He also says: "Is it then he who is a believer like the one who is a sinner? Not equal are they" (32:18); and the Prophet's (pbuh) saying: "Cursing a Muslim is a sin and fighting against him is unbelief."

On this basis some people have a degree of unbelief and some a degree of Iman as well. Hence, our Prophet (pbuh) named many sins as unbelief even though the sinner has more than an atom's weight of Iman, because of which he does not abide eternally in the Fire. As the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Cursing a Muslim is a sin and fighting him is unbelief;" he also said: "Do not become unbelievers after me,

fighting each other." This, of course, is found in many of the Prophet's (pbuh) sayings. For example, on his Ḥujjat al-Wadāᶜ, *farewell pilgrimage,* he called Muslims who fight each other without good cause unbelievers and he also called this type of action unbelief. Allah says: "If two parties among the believers fall into fighting, then you make peace between them; but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then you [all] fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair; for Allah loves those who are equitable. The believers are but a single Brotherhood so make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive Mercy" (49:9–10). He thus makes clear that they had not completely ceased to be believers. But they did have unbelief of the type that the Companions called minor unbelief. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever calls his brother an unbeliever, one of the two becomes one." If one of them became completely non-Muslim, he would no longer be his brother. However, in the situation described here, his unbelief is the kind that does not exclude Islam.

Similarly we have the reliable ḥadith that states: "There is no man who has claimed to anyone other than his father while he is teaching him but that he has unbelief." In another ḥadith we read: "Whoever repudiates his family origins, even if he is a man of no importance, is an unbeliever." And among the words in the Qur'ān that were later abrogated we read: "Do not spurn your forefathers, for it is ingratitude on your part to do so; for the rights of parents [over their children] go hand in hand with the rights of Allah [over his servants]." Thus Allah says: ". . . Give thanks to Me and to your parents, to Me is the final destination" (31:14); and He also says: "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be dutiful to your parents . . ." (17:23). The father is the source for the creation of his son, while the son is the one who has acquired the benefit. Allah also says: "His wealth and his children will not benefit him" (91:2). Ingratitude toward one's parents is a type of unbelief against Allah, since it is ingratitude toward being, out of which his Lord created him, which means that he is ungrateful to Allah for having created him. And in the language of those who came before, the Lord was described as a father. Thus, in this respect such a person has shown ingratitude toward Allah; however, he is not like one who utterly repudiates Allah. In what follows we shall speak, Allah willing, of other related ḥadiths.

THE NECESSITY OF GOING BACK TO THE BOOK AND THE SUNNAH TO CLARIFY THE MEANINGS OF IMAN AND ISLAM

Our intention here is to lay a comprehensive foundation on which knowledge of sayings may be based, and to seek solutions to people's disputes in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Muslims have different views about the words Iman and Islam because these concepts are mentioned many times, and they have been frequently discussed among Muslims. Any word that is sometimes applied in an individual sense and other times in a restricted sense will lead to controversy. For someone in search of understanding, the more he hears such words, the more obscure their meanings become to him. But he who searches for knowledge, until he knows how such words are used, knows that the best and perfect speech is that of Allah, and that what Muslims have agreed on is much more than what they disputed over.

All Muslims, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, agree that it is required to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Hereafter. Moreover, they agree that it is also required to pray, give zakah, fast, and go on pilgrimage. Furthermore, they agree that whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger enters Paradise without being punished; but whoever does not believe that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah is an unbeliever. Such bases and rules [of Iman], which constitute the foundation of religion, are agreed on by all Muslims and believers. Their disputes over some matters or the meanings of certain terms are insignificant compared to what they agreed on. Those who oppose the truth of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are well known to the majority as heretics, for such people—like the Kharijites, the Qadrites, and the Rāfiḍites—are neither trusted nor accepted by Muslims in general. Muslim scholars within the Orthodox Muslim community disputed over subtle matters that most ordinary people know nothing about, but these matters should have been referred to Allah and His Messenger. The question of the names Iman and Islam—which both refer to a duty and obligation, since none deserves Paradise unless he is a believing Muslim—must also be referred to Allah and His Messenger. Hence the truth of the matter was made clear by our Prophet (pbuh) in Gabriel's ḥadith, where he divided religion and its people into three categories, the lowest of these being Islam, the middle being Iman, and the highest being Iḥsān. Therefore, whoever reached the highest category must have passed through the other two. To clarify, muḥsin, *man of Iḥsān,* is a believer, and the believer is a Muslim, but the Muslim may not be a believer or a man of Iḥsān.

The Qur'ān classified the Islamic community into three categories, as Allah says: "Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our servants as We have chosen: but there are among them some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds; that is the highest Grace" (35:32). So the Muslim who does not fulfill the required Iman is the one who wrongs himself, the one who follows a middle course is the perfect believer who has performed the required Iman and abandoned that which is prohibited, while the one foremost in good deeds is the charitable person who worships Allah as if he saw Him directly. In the Sūrahs entitled Wāqi'ah [The Inevitable Event] and al-Muṭafafīn [Dealing in Fraud], Allah mentions that in the Hereafter, people will be divided into these three categories.

Abu Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī said that people are often mistaken concerning this matter. For example, al-Zuhrī said that Islam is a dual profession of belief, while Iman is works. Others have said that Islam and Iman are one thing, referring to Allah's verses. Allah says: "Then We evacuated those of the believers who were there, but We found no [Muslim] persons except in one house" (51:35–36). Al-Khaṭṭābī said that two scholars of knowledge discussed this matter and one of them [the author] has written a book refuting the second opinion that says that there is no difference between Islam and Iman, whereas al-Khaṭṭābī supports the former opinion. For a Muslim could be a believer in some cases but not in others. The believer, however, is always a Muslim, so every believer is a Muslim but not vice-versa.

Of the two scholars referred to by al-Khaṭṭābī, I think the first one was Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr; he was the first one to whom I explained that Islam and belief are one and the same according to Orthodox scholars of Islam and the ḥadith. There was no one else before him that I explained this to. As for the second scholar to whom he responded, I think he was. . . .[9] Al-Khaṭṭābī favors the opinion of those who differentiate between Islam and Iman—such as Abu Ja'far, Ḥammād Ibn Zayd, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Mahdī, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, and others. I know of no earlier scholars who disagreed with them. Accordingly, al-Khaṭṭābī favors this opinion, which is also the opinion of the Orthodox Muslims in general.

[9] In the three copies consulted, besides the one the translation is based on, the name of this person was left blank (as indicated by footnotes to the texts).

Abu al-Qāsim al-Taymī al-Aṣbahānī[10] and his son Muḥammad, who interpreted the book of Muslim, and others mentioned that Orthodox Muslims favor the view that, in accordance with the Prophet's statement, does not call the thief and the fornicator a believer, as indicated by the [Qur'ānic] text. Al-Khaṭṭābī, in his interpretation of al-Bukhārī, mentioned that the terms Iman and Islam are intrinsically inseparable. In his interpretation of the Sunnah, al-Baghawī, mentioned that our Prophet (pbuh) considered the word Islam as referring to overt deeds and Iman as a name for covert belief. This is not because deeds are not part of Iman, or because the taṣdīq in the heart is not part of Islam. Rather, it is a detailed analysis of things that one realizes as a comprehensive reality in religion [that is, religion includes Iman and Islam, as the above verses illustrate]. Thus our Prophet (pbuh) said: "Here comes Gabriel. He has come to teach you about your religion." Both taṣdīq and works are included in the terms Islam and Iman, as indicated in the following. Allah says: "Truly the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam . . ." (3:19); and He says: ". . . And I have chosen for you Islam as your religion . . ." (5:3); and He also says: "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him . . ." (3:85). He thus makes clear that the religion he has chosen and accepted from his servants is Islam, and that religion will not be accepted unless taṣdīq is joined to work (i.e., taṣdīq for Iman and work for Islam). In the ḥadith about Gabriel, the Prophet (pbuh) distinguishes between Islam, Iman, and Iḥsān. He ranks Iḥsān as the highest, since Iḥsān includes Iman, while Iman includes Islam. However, the reverse is not true. There is a great deal of evidence to show that the meanings of these three nouns differ according to the ways in which they are used. For example, if Islam and Iman are mentioned together we differentiate between them. But if only one of them is mentioned, it includes the meaning of the other [as mentioned previously]. An understanding of this fact resolves many questions. What was mentioned above, that religion is not acceptable unless taṣdīq is joined to work, means that Iman requires righteous work. This reveals the absolute necessity of Iman. However, it does not mean that the righteous work, which is religion, is not called Islam, and even if work is a condition of Iman's acceptability, it does not necessarily mean that it is inseparable from Iman. And even when it was inseparable from it, it is not necessary that it will be part of it.

[10] Abu al-Qāsim al-Taymī al-Aṣbahānī (?–535 A.H.) was a commentator on the Qur'ān and a scholar of ḥadith and of the Arabic language. He wrote several books on tafsīr, the most famous of which is entitled *al-Jāmiʿ fī al-Tafsīr*. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 317 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 1, p. 322.]

THE OPINION OF IBN ṢALĀḤ CONCERNING IMAN AND ISLAM

Abu ʿAmr Ibn Ṣalāḥ said that our Prophet's (pbuh) said: "Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger." He [the Prophet] also said: "Iman is to affirm your belief in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books and in His Messengers." This is the explanation of both the essence of Iman, which is inward taṣdīq, and the essence of Islam, which is overt submission and obedience. The Prophet's (pbuh) statement also indicates that whoever overtly testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger is judged to be a Muslim. But the Prophet (pbuh) also added the other four pillars [since they are the most prominent religious duties] to indicate that whoever fulfills them has completely submitted [to Allah], but whoever abandons them loosens the bond of obedience.

The term Iman includes the term Islam, as it is interpreted in the Prophet's (pbuh) ḥadith, in addition to other acts of obedience, since they are the results as well as the foundation of the inward taṣdīq, which is the essence of Iman and supports, compliments, and preserves it. Thus, our Prophet (pbuh) interpreted Iman, in his statement to the delegation of the people of ʿAbd al-Qays, as the two testimonies of belief, establishment of prayer, giving zakah, and payment of one-fifth of the spoils that falls to one's lot. So the name "perfect believer" does not refer to someone who has committed a major sin or abandoned an obligation, since the description of something as perfect is applicable only to that which is complete, and inapplicable to the [overtly] imperfect, unless some restriction is attached. Therefore, it is permissible to negate the Iman of someone based on the Prophet's (pbuh) saying: "A fornicator who fornicates is not a believer so long as he commits fornication."

The term Islam, if used alone, also includes the essence of Iman, and it is taṣdīq and the essence of acts of obedience, and all this is submission [to Allah]. He [Abu ʿAmr Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ] said that from his investigations he discovered that Islam and Iman can be found together as well as separately, and that every believer is a Muslim but not the reverse. This finding is in total agreement with the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, and the sayings of the vast majority of Muslim scholars of ḥadith and others. Often those who indulge in discussing these matters err.

THE OPINION OF THE AUTHOR CONCERNING THE STATEMENT OF IBN ṢALĀḤ

This he [Ibn Ṣalāḥ, may the Mercy of Allah be upon him] mentioned that there is harmony in the statements of Muslim scholars, and that what is in the Book and the Sunnah is the statement of the majority of the scholars, that "every believer is a Muslim and not every Muslim is a believer." And he further related that in the ḥadith in which he mentioned the roots of belief and Islam, one might note that the Prophet (pbuh) replied to questions about belief and Islam with answers that are limited to the defined. Hence, what he mentioned corresponds to both [belief and Islam], not simply to their origins. For belief is belief in what he has mentioned both inwardly and outwardly; at the same time, however, the belief of which he speaks encompasses Islam, just as Iḥsān encompasses belief.

The finding of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ is also in agreement with the statement that the essence of submission is overt Islam, since Islam is to submit to Allah both outwardly and inwardly. This is the religion that Allah has accepted from people, as indicated in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and whoever overtly, but not covertly, submits to Allah is a hypocrite whose outward submission is accepted of him, since none is commanded to investigate what is in people's hearts. If Islam includes inward taṣdīq, which is the essence of Iman, then it is necessary that every Muslim be a believer. However, this contradicts what the majority of Muslim scholars have said. Similarly, in Islam there must be an acceptance in which the essence of Iman is rooted. When the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Here comes Gabriel. He has come to teach you about your religion," and "Islam is the five pillars," he did not mean that one who fulfills these pillars without sincerity to Allah or with hypocrisy is a Muslim. However, he did mean that he who fulfills them overtly and covertly, as he is commanded, is a Muslim. Hence, Islam is the five pillars, which every able servant of Allah should fulfill for the sake of Allah. But the remaining kinds of worship are either duties [which, if some people fulfill them, are not required of others; such as praying for the dead] or rights of some people over others. Such kinds of worship follow from the five pillars, which constitute the foundation of Islam. As the Prophet (pbuh) said: "A Muslim is one from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are safe," and "Islam is providing food and offering salutations to people whom you know and whom you do not know." So these five are the pillars of Islam, as well as of Iman. Concerning the statement that acts of obedience are

the fruits of inward taṣdīq, two things are meant. First, it means that acts of obedience are a necessary outgrowth of belief, such that whenever inward belief is present, outward acts of obedience will also be in evidence. This is the view adopted by the pious ancestors and other Orthodox Muslims. Second, it means that inward belief may be a cause in the sense that it exists in completeness even before such acts of obedience have come into being. This is the view of the Murjiʾites, the Jahmites, and others. And as we mentioned above, they are in error in three different respects. First, they err in thinking that the belief in one's heart may be complete without the works of the heart, such as loving and revering Allah, fearing Allah and relying on Him, and longing to meet Him. Second, they are in error by thinking that the belief that is in one's heart may be complete without outward actions. This is the view adopted by all the Murjiʾites. Their third error is their claim that whoever is declared to be an unbeliever by the Lawgiver [i.e., the Prophet] is declared to be so because of the absence of inward taṣdīq in the blessed, almighty Lord. Many later thinkers, who tacitly agree with the Murjiʾites' and Jahmites' views on belief, confuse the doctrines of the pious ancestors with the claims of the Murjiʾites and Jahmites, and therefore make no distinction between them. Such people hold the pious ancestors and ḥadith scholars in great awe, and think that they are reconciling the views of the pious ancestors with the views of others.

Al-Marwazī Does Not Differentiate between Islam and Iman

Abu ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī said: "A third group, which represents the great majority of Orthodox Muslims and ḥadith scholars, said that the Iman that Allah has called for and commands us to follow is Islam, which He declares to be the religion He would accept from His servants. Islam is the opposite of unbelief, which Allah abhors". He [Allah] says: ". . . He likes not disbelief for His slaves . . ." (39:7); and ". . . I have chosen for you Islam as your religion . . ." (5:3); and "Those whom Allah wills to guide, He opened his breast to Islam . . ." (6:125); and "Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam, so that he has received the light from his Lord . . ." (39:22). It follows that Allah praises Islam in the same way He praises Iman. He also makes Islam a name of praise and thanks, and declares that he who submits to Islam will receive enlightenment and guidance from Allah. Moreover, He indicates that Islam is the religion which He

chooses, praises and makes obligatory. Do you not see that His Prophets and Messengers desired it [Islam] and asked Allah to have it? For example, Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl said that Allah says: "Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to Thy [Will], and of our progeny a Muslim people, bowing to Thy [Will] . . ." (2:128). Yūsuf said that Allah says: "Cause me to die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous ones . . ." (12:101). Allah also says: "And this was enjoined by Ibrāhīm upon his sons, and so did Jacob [saying]: 'Oh, my sons! Allah has chosen for you the true religion, then die not except as Muslims'" (2:132). Allah also says: ". . . And say to the People of the Book and to those who are unlearned: Do you [also] submit yourselves? If they do, they are in right guidance . . ." (3:20). In another place Allah says: "Say you: 'We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Ibrāhīm, Ismāʿīl, and Isḥāq . . .'" (2:136); and "So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right path . . ." (2:137). Accordingly, Allah's judgment is that whoever submits to Allah is rightly guided, and whoever believes is also rightly guided. Hence He equates the two.

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī says that we have mentioned the entire argument in support of the claim that Islam is Iman, that they are neither separate nor different from each other, an argument we prefer not to repeat so as not to be verbose or bore the reader. However, we will cite the evidence that was not mentioned previously, so as to show how it has been misinterpreted. We will also mention the pieces of evidence they cite from the Qur'ān and other sources in order to clarify the difference between Islam and Iman.

Explaining the View of al-Marwazī and Responding to It

Al-Marwazī means to say that the praiseworthy Muslim is the praiseworthy believer, and that the blameworthy Muslim lacks both Islam and Iman. Moreover, every believer is a Muslim and every Muslim must have Iman: this is right and agreed upon. He also means to say that whoever is called a Muslim is likewise called a believer. However, a dispute over terminology arises here. Al-Marwazī's claim is that the connotation of one is the same as that of the other, but this similarity was never reported by our ancestors, although it is said that they [Islam and Iman] are inseparable from each other. But in this case, the referent of the first word must not be the same as the referent of the other. Indeed, he does not cite any of the Prophet's Companions, their Successors, or Muslim jurists, who said that

the term Islam is the same as the term Iman. But what is well known about the pious ancestors and their successors is that the believer who deserves the promise of Allah is the Muslim. Hence every Muslim is a believer and every believer is a Muslim. This fact is agreed upon by the pious ancestors and their successors, as well as all Islamic sects, who said: "A believer who is promised Paradise must be a Muslim; and a Muslim who is promised Paradise must be a believer; and whoever enters Paradise without punishment is a believing Muslim."

Orthodox Muslims say that whoever comes out of Hell and enters Paradise has some Iman, but the dispute is over that term—that is, whether to call them believers or not. The ancestors narrated that Iman is words and works, but they did not state such a thing concerning Islam. However, since the great majority of Muslim jurists say that Islam is the whole religion, not merely the utterance of the two testimonies of belief (which is in conflict with al-Zuhrī's view), and that prayer, giving zakah, fasting, pilgrimage, and other similar obligations are part of Islam as well as of Iman, al-Marwazī took them to be one thing. However, this is not so. For Iman requires Islam; this is unanimously agreed upon, but it does not mean that they are one thing. There is no single piece of evidence that indicates that Islam requires Iman [contrary to al-Marwazī's argument that there is no difference between Islam and Iman]. But does Islam require the obligatory or perfect Iman? Indeed, this is a controversial question. Al-Marwazī does not cite any evidence in support of the claim that Islam requires Iman. However, the prophets whom Allah described as Muslims were [true] believers, and Allah described them as such. Yet even if He did not mention this, we would know for certain that all prophets are believers.

The foremost Muslims were also believers. And if it happens that Islam necessitates Iman, then we can say that they are inseparable, or that every Muslim is a believer and every believer is a Muslim. This is true if it means that a Muslim who enters Paradise has the required Iman or that a Muslim who is rewarded for his worship must have the essence of Iman. Hence, every Muslim is a believer, although it might not be the Iman that our Prophet (pbuh) negated of the one who does not desire for his brother [in Islam] what he desires for himself, or one who commits major sins, or the desert Arabs and others. If it is said that Islam and perfect Iman are inseparable, this does not imply that one is the other. In this regard they are like the soul and the body, since there is no soul without a body, and there is no living body without a soul; but one is not the other. Iman is like the

soul that exists in a body, and Islam is like the body, which cannot live without a soul. For they are inseparable, but the referents of the two terms are not the same thing. On the other hand, the Islam of hypocrites is like the dead body: a corpse without a soul. For there is no living body without a soul. But souls vary widely, as illustrated in the Prophet's (pbuh) ḥadith: "Souls of the same type flock together." It is not that every one who prays [using his body] has a heart enlightened by fear and remembrance of Allah and understanding of the Qur'ān, even if he is rewarded for his prayer. So overt Islam is like overt prayer; and Iman is like the knowledge of Allah, reverence, and the understanding of the Qur'ān that are found in the heart at the time of prayer. So whoever has a humble heart has a humble body, but not the reverse. That is why it is said: "Avoid the humility of hypocrites." That is, do not show reverence with your body if it is not in your heart as well. But if the heart is pure, the whole body is also pure.

People's Levels with Respect to Iman and Islam

With respect to belief and Islam, people are to be found on three different levels: one who wrongs himself, one who adopts a middle course, and one who outdoes others in bringing blessing. The person who is a Muslim, both outwardly and inwardly, yet who is wronging himself must have some measure of belief; nevertheless, he has not performed his [religious] obligations. Neither, however, has he turned back [from belief]. The same is true of the other levels. A discussion of this will follow, if Allah wills.

Indeed, the verses that Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr cites indicate the obligation to embrace Islam, which is the religion chosen by Allah. This is entirely correct. However, it does not indicate that Islam is Iman itself, nor does it indicate that a man enters Paradise by merely being a Muslim [as Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr claims in his first argument]. Allah promises the believers Paradise in many verses, but He does not use the term Muslims therein. But Allah's praise and love [for Islam] indicate that it is part of Iman. This is agreed on among Orthodox Muslims, who say that every believer is a Muslim and that whoever fulfills the required Iman has also fulfilled the required Islam. But the controversy is over the opposite situation [that is, whether every Muslim is a believer]. In other words, although Allah desires and commands Muslims to pray, this does not indicate that prayer is Iman

itself; rather, it is implied in Iman. Hence, every believer is someone who prays, but it does not necessarily follow that every one who prays is a believer.

Indeed, all the evidence al-Marwazī cites from our Prophet's (pbuh) sayings differentiates between Iman and Islam, as for example in the ḥadith concerning Gabriel, which indicates that if the term Iman is used alone, Islam will be implied in it.

Abu ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ḥāmid Explains the Views of Muslim Scholars Concerning Iman and Islam

In his book entitled *al-Munṣif fi Uṣūl al-Dīn* [On the Foundations of Religion] Abu ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ḥāmid said: "We have mentioned that Iman is words and works. But Islam [in Aḥmad's opinion] bears two meanings: (1) Islam is as Iman; (2) Islam is words without works." The same opinion is stated by Ismāʿīl Ibn Saʿīd [al-Shālinjī], who said that the correct narration is that it is words and works. As for Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's statement that Islam is words only, what he meant is that embracing Islam does not require what belief does by way of works, which are a condition of its reality. Prayer, for example, is not a necessary condition for one to be a Muslim, since according to the statement attributed to [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal], one does not become an unbeliever by neglecting prayer.

Ibn Ḥāmid continues that we have judged that Islam and Iman are two terms with two different meanings, and we have mentioned the jurists' dispute over this. Mālik, Shurayk, and Ḥammād Ibn Zayd likewise differentiate between Islam and Iman. However, the followers of al-Shafiʿī and Abu Ḥanīfah have argued that they are two names with one meaning. He [Ibn Ḥāmid] adds that at the time of committing a major sin, Iman ceases to be found in one's heart, so one ceases to be a believer and becomes only a Muslim. But if he repents, he becomes a believer even if he may commit minor sins. Then he [Ibn Ḥāmid] cites some evidence for this, but what he quotes refutes the view that Islam is merely the utterance of the two testimonies of belief. For there are many pieces of evidence that indicate that works are part of Islam. For example, we have the ḥadiths that state: "A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are safe;" and "Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and Muḥammad (pbuh) is His Messenger, to pray, to give zakah, to fast during the month of Ramaḍān, and to perform the

pilgrimage, if you can bear the expense of the journey." Accordingly, whoever says that overt deeds that Allah commands are not part of Islam is wrong. By contrast, there is no authorized evidence to indicate that the heart's acceptance is part of Islam. The Prophet (pbuh) interpreted Islam to mean turning one's face and surrendering one's heart to Allah. Thus, sincerity to Allah is Islam, but not the acceptance that refers merely to the heart's knowledge.

Although Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal states in one place that Islam is the two testimonies of belief, he states elsewhere that works are part of Islam, and in this he agrees with al-Zuhrī. If by saying that Islam is the two testimonies of belief one means that by uttering these two testimonies of belief one enters into Islam without fulfilling perfect Islam, then he is correct. However, if he means that by uttering the two testimonies one fulfills perfect Islam, then he is absolutely wrong. Indeed, Aḥmad denied such an interpretation. It follows then that one should be called a Muslim even if he does not perform the works. This is in accordance with the ḥadith of the Angel Gabriel. Thus, the statement of Aḥmad should have been mentioned in its totality.

Ismāʿīl Ibn Saʿid [al-Shālinjī] said that when he asked Aḥmad about Islam and Iman, he said that Iman is words and works, while Islam is verbal testimony. He [Ismāʿīl] also said that when he asked Aḥmad about him who said "If I do what Gabriel told the Prophet (pbuh) when he [the latter] asked him about Islam, am I Muslim?" he [Aḥmad] said, yes. To this the man replied that if one does not do what Gabriel told the Prophet (pbuh), is he also a Muslim? No, he [Aḥmad] replied, for this contradicts what is in Gabriel's ḥadith.

Accordingly, Aḥmad considers the one who does not fulfill the five pillars of Islam to be a non-Muslim, although he also says that Islam is verbal testimony. In other words, verbal profession is made at the time of conversion into Islam, though the required Islam is incomplete unless one fulfills the five pillars. However, Aḥmad criticizes the one who does not follow what is in Gabriel's ḥadith. Moreover, in many of his answers he charges him who does not pray with unbelief, and Muslims unanimously agree that an unbeliever is not a Muslim. Hence it is clear that Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal did not mean that Islam is merely the two testimonies of faith without works. And if one thinks that by Islam Aḥmad meant the two testimonies alone, this means that even if one abandons the four other pillars [of Islam], he will not be charged with unbelief. However, most statements

attributed to him are against this. And even those (namely, al-Shafiʿī Mālik, and Abu Ḥanīfah) who do not accuse the person who abandons these pillars of being an unbeliever, consider deeds to be a part of Islam. This being the case, how is it that Aḥmad does not consider them as part of Islam, although his opinion on this is stronger than that of others? It has been related of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal that he considered Saʿd's ḥadith to be in conflict with that of ʿUmar, and that he preferred the former to the latter.[11]

Al-Ḥassan Ibn ʿAlī once said that he once asked Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal about belief or Islam. He [the latter] said that ʿUmar's ḥadith relates to this; however, I prefer the one related by Saʿd, as if he understood that the one related by ʿUmar indicated that works are what is referred by the term Islam, which is preferable, whereas the account related by Saʿd indicates that the entity referred to by the term "belief" is preferable. However, ʿUmar's ḥadith mentions nothing about Islam except for outward works. And these are not considered to constitute belief unless they are joined to inward belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers, in which case it would be partial belief. Hence, the entity referred to by the term "belief" is preferable, as indicated by Saʿd's ḥadith, and there is no real inconsistency between the two ḥadiths.

As for the distinction made by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal between Islam and belief, he would sometimes make the distinction, and at other times mention some difference between them, without making any definitive statement about them. Moreover, when he would draw a comparison between them, he would say: "Islam is merely the words [of the testimony] one utters," whereas at other times he would not say this. Likewise, with respect to declaring someone an unbeliever for having neglected some of the basic religious obligations of Islam, he would sometimes declare people to be unbelievers on this basis, to the point of becoming

[11] [The following footnote is taken from the MI.2 edition, pp. 354–55.] As for ʿUmar's ḥadith, it concerns the coming of the Angel Gabriel (upon him be peace) in the form of a desert Arab. The final part of the ḥadith (which has been mentioned earlier) reads as follows: "Here is Gabriel, who has come to teach you your religion." As for the ḥadith related by Saʿd, it tells us that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) gave gifts to a group of people while Saʿd was seated (nearby). However, the Prophet (pbuh) ignored one of the men, who of all of them was the most admirable, in Saʿd's view. So he said to him: "Oh Messenger of Allah, what do you have against this man? For indeed, I perceive him to be a believer." To which the Prophet replied: ". . . or a Muslim." (This ḥadith was recorded by al-Bukhārī.)

enraged, while at other times he would not declare them to be unbelievers at all. Maymūnī tells us that he once said: "Oh, Abu ʿAbd Allah [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal], do you distinguish between Islam and belief?" "Yes," he replied. "On what basis?" Maymūnī asked. He answered: "The majority of ḥadiths point to such a distinction." As it is said: "The fornicator is not a believer as long as he commits fornication, nor is the thief a believer as long as he steals." While Allah says "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith; but you [only] say we have submitted our wills to Allah . . .'" (49:14). Besides, Ḥammād Ibn Zayd also makes a distinction between Islam and Iman. And it was related to us by Abu Salamah al-Khuzāʿī that Mālik and Sharīk, along with Ḥammād Ibn Zayd, all drew a distinction between Islam and belief.

Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal said that a man once told him that if we never learned any more about belief than this, it would be good. So he said to Abu ʿAbd Allah: "Do you base your views on the apparent meaning of what is in the Qurʾān along with al-Sunan?" "Yes," he replied. So he asked: "What about the Murjiʾites' claim that Islam is based on mere words?" He answered: "They do not distinguish between Islam and belief, and they consider the Muslim and the believer to be one and the same; moreover, they hold that both have belief as complete and perfect as that of Gabriel." Then he [Aḥmad] said: "Is this the basis of our argument against them?" "Yes," he replied. Hence, he made an absolute distinction between them, basing his argument on the [religious] texts [of Islam].

Ṣāliḥ Ibn Aḥmad[12] said that his father was once asked about Islam and belief, and he replied by saying that, according to Ibn Abī Dhiʾb,[13] Islam is based on what one says, while belief is based on what one does. Then he [the father] was asked: and what do you say about it? To which he replied that Islam and belief are not synonymous with each other, citing the ḥadith mentioned above from Saʿd. In this ḥadith the Prophet (pbuh) did not show preference for the view that Islam is based solely on an utterance; rather, he simply replied that Islam is to be distinguished from belief, as evidenced by what we read in both the Qurʾān and in this reliable ḥadith.

[12] Ṣāliḥ Ibn Aḥmad, Abu al-Faḍl (?–265 A.H.), was a jurist and the son of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 273.]

[13] Ibn Abī Dhiʾb, Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (?–158 A.H.), was a jurist of Madīnah. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 328.]

Ḥanbal (Ibn Hilāl al-Shaybānī)[14] said that Abu ʿAbd Allah [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] has related Buraydah's ḥadith to us, which says: "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to teach Muslims, if they passed by a graveyard, to say, 'Peace be upon you [deceased] believers and Muslims. We will follow you, if Allah wills.'" Ḥanbal said: "I heard Abu ʿAbd Allah say that in this ḥadith there is evidence against the person who said: 'Iman is mere words. Thus, I am a [true] believer,'" for the Prophet's (pbuh) reference to "believers and Muslims" differentiates between a Muslim and a believer and belies the claim of one who says: "I am a true believer." His saying: "We will follow you, Allah willing," although he knows he will die, shows the importance of adding the phrase, "if Allah wills," to the statement, "I am a believer."

Abu al-Ḥārith [Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣāʾigh] said that he asked Abu ʿAbd Allah about the ḥadith, "The fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits fornication, and no drunkard who drinks wine is a believer as long as he drinks it." He answered that people have varied widely in their interpretations. For example, ʿAṭāʾ said that Iman turns aside from a sinner. Ṭāwūs said that if one commits a sin, he is no longer a believer. Al-Ḥassan said that if one repents, Iman will be restored to him. Some have said that [the sinner] ceases to be a believer and becomes only a Muslim, but he does not cease to be a Muslim. This issue is also mentioned by Ṣāliḥ [the son of Imām Aḥmad], who narrated the issues of Abu Ḥārith and who once asked his father about it. The father replied that it was narrated that Abu Jaʿfar said: "The fornicator who fornicates is not a believer as long as he commits fornication." When he heard this ḥadith, he remarked that a sinner ceases to be a believer and becomes only a Muslim. Therefore, anyone who commits an act of fornication will exit from the status of a believer to that of a Muslim. Hence, Islam is a prerequisite of Iman. Al-Zuhrī said that when Saʿd's ḥadith was narrated he found that Islam is the two testimonies of belief, while Iman is works. To this Aḥmad replied that this ḥadith has different interpretations and that Allah alone knows best.

Hence, he [Aḥmad] makes mention of the views held by those who were followers of the Companions of the Prophet, yet without stating a preference for any of them over any others. This may be because all their views were valid, and because he

[14] Ḥanbal, Ibn Hilāl (?–273 A.H.), a cousin of Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, died in Wāsiṭ, Iraq. He devoted his time to working on the science of ḥadith and history. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 328.]

was in agreement with all of them, just as he has stated elsewhere that the person who commits fornication ceases to be a believer and becomes [only] a Muslim. Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others of the pious ancestors do not use the term ta'wīl, *interpretation,* to refer to the practice of denying the apparent meanings of expressions [in the Qur'ān]; rather, they employ the term ta'wīl to refer to interpretation and to the explication of what a given expression means. Thus we have the words of 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), who said: "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) often used to say as he knelt and prostrated himself before Allah: 'Praise be to you, Oh, Allah, forgive me,'" as he interpreted the Qur'ān. However, what has been said by the Successors of the Prophet's Companions does not conflict with the apparent meaning of the ḥadith; on the contrary, it supports it. It is also in agreement with Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal's] interpretation of it, even if [such an interpretation] is consistent with its apparent meaning. Otherwise, the innovator or heretic might suppose its meaning to be that he became an unbeliever with no belief whatsoever, as the Khārijites' claim. For the ḥadith provides no evidence for this view; and whoever denies that such people have belief considers them to be Muslims but not believers.

Al-Marwazī relates that Abu 'Abd Allah [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] was once asked: "Are we believers?" "We say we are Muslims," he replied. Then I said to him: "Shall we say that we are believers?" He said: "No, rather, we are Muslims;" this is because part of the essence of Islam is to make the exception with regard to belief. For one does not know whether someone has performed everything Allah commands him, even if he says: "I am righteous," "I am Allah-fearing," or "I am one of Allah's saints." But this does not prevent one from omitting the exception if what one means to say is simply, "I believe"; in this case all a person is doing is affirming the belief that exists in his heart, rather than stating with absolute certainty that he has carried out all of Allah's commands. Similarly, one might state with certainty that he loves Allah and His Messenger, that he detests unbelief against Allah, or other things he may know for certain to be true about the present state of his heart. The same would apply if what he meant to say was that he was a believer outwardly, in which case there is nothing to prevent him from affirming unequivocally that which is known about him. Rather, like all members of extremist sects, he detests the claims of the Murji'ites, who say that belief is identical in all those who possess it. They claim that everyone who has belief has it in the very same degree, the way every human being has a head, so that someone

might say: "I am truly a believer," or "I am a believer in the eyes of Allah," just as someone might say: "I truly have a head," or "I truly have a head in the eyes of Allah." For whoever makes such an unequivocal statement has excluded all works, both inward and outward, from the definition of belief. However, this is a reprehensible thing to say, as well as being a falsehood in the view of the Prophet's Companions, their Successors, and all other Muslims. As for the question of when and whether one is required to make the exception, people have voiced various opinions, which shall be discussed later.

The Reply to Those Who Do Not Differentiate between Iman and Islam

On this subject there are two extreme views. The first says that Islam is solely uttering the words [the testimony] and that overt works are not part of it. The second view states that the meanings of Islam and Iman are the same. However, both views are weak and contradict the ḥadiths of Gabriel and the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh). So although Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī agreed with the second view, he did not have evidence to support it. However, he did cite evidence that refutes the first view. This evidence is found in the story of the desert Arabs, where Allah says: ". . . Say, do not count your Islam as a favor upon me: No, Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the belief, if you are true and sincere" (49:17). He [al-Marwazī] said that this verse indicates that Islam is the same as Iman. However, some hold that this verse indicates exactly the reverse of what al-Marwazī claims. For the desert Arabs did not say: "We have submitted our wills to Allah." Rather they said: "We believe," whereupon Allah ordered them to say: "We have submitted our wills to Allah." Then He called them Muslims, saying: ". . . Say, do not count your Islam as a favor upon me: No, Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the belief, if you be true and sincere" (49:17). This was in response to their saying: "We believe." If Islam were Iman itself, He need not have said: "If you be true and sincere," for surely they were true and sincere in saying: "we submitted our wills to Allah," although they did not actually state this. But Allah says: "They impress on you as a favor that they have embraced Islam. Say, ' Do not count your Islam as a favor upon me: No, Allah has conferred a favor upon you . . .'" (49:17). That is, they consider that they have done Allah a favor by submitting their wills to Him. Allah calls their deeds Islam, though there is no evidence in this verse that indicates that they

called it Islam. Rather they said "We believe." Then Allah says that He has conferred a favor upon them by His guiding them to Iman. As for Islam that does not have Iman with it, if they only submit their wills to Allah out of fear of the sword, yet without believing, they confer a favor upon no one. And if Allah had not guided them to Iman, then their Islam would be like that of hypocrites, which Allah does not accept. However, if they were true and sincere in saying "We believe," Allah is the One Who has conferred a favor upon them in that He guides them to Iman and to the Islam that is included in Iman. In this verse Allah denies their Iman and makes His favor dependent on their being true and sincere, indicating that it was possible for them to be thus. It is said that they became true and sincere after this. It is also said that something tied to a condition does not entail the presence of the condition itself. It is likewise said that they had a degree of Iman, but what kind of Iman is it that he described the second time? Is it that they have a branch of Iman?

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr pointed out that Allah says: "And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion . . ." (98:5); and "The religion in the Sight of Allah is Islam . . ." (3:19). Accordingly, Allah refers to the establishment of prayer and the giving of zakah as Islam. He also refers to dīn, *religion,* as Islam. Hence, whoever does not give zakah has abandoned a part of religion, which is Islam. Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr then cites [as support for his opinion] the argument of the group that differentiates between Islam and Iman by saying that Iman is words and works; and that prayer and zakah, which Allah calls religion, are part of Iman; moreover, the religion accepted by Allah is Islam. Accordingly, Allah refers to Islam and Iman as the same thing. Similar opinions are attributed to the Prophet (pbuh). But whoever claims that Islam is mere verbal testimony and that works are not part of Islam has violated the Book and the Sunnah. Indeed, such a person is no different from the Murji'ites, who claim that Iman is verbal testimony without works.

He [al-Marwazī] said that Allah makes prayer and zakah part of religion, which is Islam, and it is a commendable view, which agrees with the saying of Gabriel. So is his refutation of the claim that works are not part of Islam. However, he also said that Allah refers to Islam and Iman as one and the same, which is untrue. For Allah says: "The religion in the Sight of Allah is Islam . . ." (3:19). However, He did not say, "the religion in the Sight of Allah is Iman," but rather, "this religion is of Iman." For the essence of Iman is knowledge of the heart and affirming it.

Al-Marwazī claims that works follow from such knowledge, and that assent is inseparable from this knowledge. Moreover, a servant of Allah cannot be a believer without both of them [works and assent]. However, Islam is mere work with words, and knowledge and assent are not part of it, although Islam necessarily entails this very assent. For there is no work without knowledge. But Islam does not require the detailed Iman that Allah declares in His sayings: "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the Cause of Allah: Such are the sincere ones" (49:15); and "For believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His signs rehearsed, find their belief strengthened, and put [all] their trust in their Lord" (8:2).

All the [religious] texts [of Islam] negate the Iman of those who do not possess the qualities of a believer. And indeed, many individuals are Muslims both outwardly and inwardly with total assent, yet they are not characterized by Iman. Allah says: "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him . . ." (3:85); and ". . . And I have chosen for you Islam as your religion . . ." (5:3). However, He does not say that if anyone desires knowledge, assent, and Iman other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him. Nor does he say that He has chosen for you Islam as your assent and knowledge. For Islam is implied in religion, works, obedience, and submission. So, whoever desires a religion other than Islam, his religion will not be accepted. Iman, by contrast, is tranquility and assurance, the origin of which are knowledge, assent, and understanding. And from Iman, religion follows. Accordingly, it is said: "I believed in Allah," and "I submitted to the will of Allah." Allah says: "Moses said: 'Oh, my people! If you do [really] believe in Allah, then in Him put your trust if you are really Muslims'" (10:84). If this is what is meant by both of them [Iman and Islam, then it will be repetitious. Allah also says: "For Muslim men and women—for believing men and women . . ." (33:35). He also says in this same verse: "True men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves." Hence, a believer possesses all these qualities; but these qualities do not correspond to the general or the specific requirements of Iman. Whenever the Prophet worshiped Allah in the middle of the night he would say: "Oh, Allah, I have submitted my will to You, believed in You, put my trust in You, turned to You in repentance, fought for Your Sake, and relied on You for settling all my

affairs." It is also recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that whenever the Prophet (pbuh) prostrated himself at night in prayer to Allah he would say: "Oh, Allah, I have bowed down to You, believed in You, and submitted my will to You." And when he bowed down, he used to say: "Oh, Allah, I have bowed down to You, submitted my will to You, and believed in You." When the Prophet (pbuh) clarified the qualities of both a Muslim and a believer, he said: "A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are safe, whereas a believer is he whom people trust with their persons and property." And it is well known that safety from being wronged by someone differs from trusting him with one's person and property. Indeed, the latter ranks higher than the former, for whenever people trust someone with their persons and property, they feel safe from the danger of his tongue and hand; otherwise, they would not do so. But the reverse is not necessarily true. And based on this one may see the distinction between Islam and Iman.

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr said that whoever claims that Islam is verbal testimony and that works are not part of it has violated the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. For all Qur'ānic texts indicate that works are part of Islam. He said: "There is no distinction between this view and that of the Murji'ites, who claim that belief is merely verbal testimony apart from works."

Hence someone might say that there is a distinction between them, since Orthodox Muslims, such as al-Zuhrī and others, who held similar views have said that works enter into the definition of belief, whereas Islam to them is also a part of belief. Hence, they see belief as being more complete than Islam and this is in total agreement with the Book and the Sunnah. They also hold the view that people possess varying degrees of belief. Both of these views are consistent with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. As for the Murji'ites, they say that belief represents part of Islam, Islam being the more perfect and superior of the two entities. They also hold that everyone who possesses belief possesses it to the same degree; hence, the belief of one of the Companions of the Prophet and that of the most iniquitous, sinful individual would be equal. A corresponding view of theirs is that no one can have partial belief, which is in conflict with both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] responded to this question in one of the two versions of his teachings, saying that Islam is the words [testimony] one utters. Al-Zuhrī says that

sometimes he [Aḥmad] agreed with those who hold this view, while at other times he did not. Rather, he mentions the fact that both the Book and the Sunnah support the notion that Islam is to be distinguished from belief. Hence, when he responded by referring to al-Zuhrī's statement, al-Maymūnī replied to him, saying: "Oh, Abu ʿAbd Allah! Do you distinguish between Islam and belief?" "Yes," he replied. "On what basis can we argue for this view?" he asked. "Most of the ḥadiths provide evidence in support of this," he replied. Then he [al-Maymūnī] said: "The fornicator is not a believer so long as he commits fornication, and the thief is not a believer so long as he steals." Allah says: "The desert Arabs: Say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith; but you [only] say: We have submitted our wills to Allah . . .'" (49:14). I then asked him: "So do you base your views on the straightforward meaning of the Book and the Sunan?" "Yes," he replied. "So what about the Murjiʾites' view that Islam is an utterance?" He replied: "They consider the Muslim and the believer to be one and the same. Moreover, they view them both as having belief as perfect and complete as that of Gabriel." I then asked: "Is this the basis of our argument against them?" "Yes," he said, "since Aḥmad has replied that they consider the flagrant sinner to be a believer with belief as complete and perfect as that of the angel Gabriel."

As for his statement that the Murjiʾites considered the Muslim and the believer to be one and the same, it is the view of those who hold that religion and belief are the same thing. For Islam is religion, and they make no distinction between Islam and belief. This is the view of the Murjiʾites according to many of the authoritative scholars of Islam, such as al-S͟hāfiʿī, Abu ʿUbayd, and others who have debated with those who take this position. For it is known from the writings of the Murjiʾites that they make a distinction between the terms "religion" and "belief," and between Islam and "belief," saying that part of Islam is belief, and part of it is works. Some of these works are religious obligations, while others are supererogatory acts of devotion. However, the words of the pious ancestors were based on what appeared to them to be the teachings of heretical sects such as the Jahmites, to whom they used to attribute the view that Allah is everywhere. This was the teaching of a sect known as the Najjārites; but as for the majority of their opponents among the Jahmites, the Muʿtazilites, the Ḍararites, and others, they taught that Allah is neither within the world, outside the world, nor above it.

DISCUSSION OF PREDESTINATION

Similarly we have what they wrote about the Qadarite sect, to whom they attributed the view that neither [divine] knowledge nor the Qur'ān is [uncreated]. Concerning the Qadarites, Ibn ʿUmar once said: "If you should encounter the followers of that sect, inform them that I have nothing to do with them, and that they in turn should have nothing more to do with me." This is the sect that says that Allah gives commands and prohibitions to His servants without having any prior knowledge of who will obey or disobey him, or who will enter Heaven or Hell, until these things had actually occurred. Therefore they said that the command was 'unuf, *new*—that is, it was newly begun or musta'naf, *commenced*. For example, one might refer to a "new garden," meaning one that is growing profusely yet has never been tended before. With reference to Allah, it means that He comes to know for the first time who is blessed and who is damned; this awareness begins without Allah's having had prior knowledge of such things and without there being a preexisting book [in which future events are recorded]. Hence, what one does is not based on a sort of emulation of a preordained divine decree; rather, it comes about as an entirely new event. If someone wants to do something, he predetermines within himself what he desires to do, then proceeds to do it, revealing outwardly what he has determined in his heart. This sort of predetermination within one's self is called khalq, *creation*. As the poet said:

> Ah, you are sharpening what you have created,
> while some people create, yet do not sharpen.

In other words, unlike other people, you are a person who, if he sets his mind to something, carries it out and brings it to pass. As Allah says: "Indeed, We have created every thing by measure" (54:49). Before creating anything, Allah knows everything that will be. Moreover, He creates according to His will, since He knows and desires whatever He makes. His knowledge and His will are self-existent, and based on this self-existent will and knowledge Allah speaks, as when He says: "That I will fill Hell with you [Iblīs] and those of them [mankind] that follow you, together" (38:85); and "And had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord, and a term already determined, the judgment would have been inevitable [in this world]" (20:129); and "And, indeed, Our Word has gone forth of old for Our slaves—the Messengers. That they indeed would be made

triumphant. And that Our forces, they indeed would be the victors" (37:171–73); and "Indeed, We gave the Book to Moses, but differences arose therein, and had it not been for a Word that had gone forth before from your Lord, the case would have been judged between them . . ." (11:110). Among the things Allah records in the Book are those things that He predetermines. He says: "Know you not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Indeed, it is all in the Book. Indeed! That is easy for Allah" (22:70). According to Ibn ʿAbbās, Allah creates humanity knowing what they would do beforehand; then He speaks of His knowledge, saying: "Be a Book," and so it was a Book. Then He reveals evidence of this. Allah says: "Know you not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Indeed, it is all in the Book. Indeed! That is easy for Allah" (22:70). He also says: "No calamity falls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of decrees, before We bring it into existence. Indeed, that is easy for Allah" (57:22); and "And indeed We have written in the Zabūr [Book of Psalms] after the Reminder [the Message given to Moses], My righteous slaves will inherit the earth" (21:105); and "Allah effaces what He will and confirms [what He will]. And with Him is the Mother of the Book" (13:39); and "And when you said to the angels: 'Indeed, I am about to place a viceroy on earth.' They said: 'Will you place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood while we glorify You with praises and thanks and sanctify You?' He says: 'I know that which you do not know'" (2:30). So if even the Angels had prior knowledge of the destruction and bloodshed that human beings would bring about on earth, how much more knowledge would Allah have of such things? This is true whether, as most Qurʾānic exegetists hold, the Angels came to know such things by a revelation from Allah [in which case He is more knowledgeable than they were concerning that which He had revealed to them] or whether, as some believe, the Angels made such a statement based on what they had seen before. Allah knows best what shall become of His creatures, who themselves have no knowledge that He himself has not taught them, or that He has not revealed to His Prophets or others. For none of us comprehends anything of Allah's knowledge unless He wills it.

Allah speaks to the Angels, saying: ". . . Indeed, I am about to place a viceroy on earth . . ." (2:30), before commanding them to prostrate themselves to Adam, before Iblīs had refused to bow down, before He had forbidden Adam to eat from the tree, and before Adam had eaten from it, thereby bringing about his fall to earth.

Hence, Allah already knows that He will appoint Adam as a vicegerent on earth even as He gave both Adam and Iblīs commands that He knew they would disobey, whereupon He commands them both to descend to earth and to be His vicegerents there. This makes it clear that Allah knows ahead of time that they will disobey His commands. Iblīs refused to bow down to Adam, hating him, becoming his enemy, and tempting him to eat from the tree and thereby become a sinner like himself. Iblīs had sworn that he would lure all human beings into sin, requesting that he be granted jurisdiction over the earth until the day when all would be resurrected, since he was set on luring Adam and his progeny into temptation with all the power at his disposal. However, Adam received words from Allah that led him to repent; he was then rightly guided by his Lord and chosen as a prophet. In this way, human beings obtained a way to find happiness and to be delivered from the snares into which Satan might cause them to fall through his deceitful allure. This way was the way of repentance. Allah says: "So that Allah will punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the men and women who associate partners in worship with Him. And Allah will pardon the believers, men and women . . ." (33:73). For Allah's foreordained decree encompassed all these things before they came to pass. As for Iblīs, he persisted in his sinful ways, excusing himself by objecting that this was Allah's foreordained decree and asking for the right to oversee earth's affairs in hopes of luring others into destruction. However, Adam and his wife turned to Allah in repentance. Allah says: "They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be the losers'" (7:23). As a result, Allah restored Adam to His grace, chose him and gave him right guidance, then set him on earth to work there in obedience to Him, so that consequently Allah might elevate him in such a way that after this his entrance into Paradise might be more perfect than it would have been otherwise. For whoever of Adam's descendants sins, then follows Adam's example by repenting, shall be blessed. And if he repents, believes and does good works, Allah will transform his evil deeds into good ones. In fact, like all Allah-fearing saints, he will be more righteous after his repentance than he was before having sinned. As for those who follow Iblīs' example by persisting in their sin, using Allah's foreknowledge as an excuse for their actions and attempting to lure others into temptation, they will be among those of whom Allah says: "That I will fill Hell with you [Iblīs] and those of them [mankind] that follow you, together" (38:85).

The point behind the present discussion has been to raise the issue of Allah's divine decree. It has been established in *Sahīh Muslim* on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAmr that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "With His throne over the waters, Allah foreordained the fates of His creatures fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth." And we read in *Sahīh al-Bukhārī,* on the authority of ʿImrān Ibn Ḥuṣayn, that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "He [Allah] Is, and nothing existed before Him. His throne is upon the waters, and He records everything in the Reminder [Qur'ān]. Then He created the heavens and the earth." And we have several accounts in the two books of ḥadith [Ṣaḥīḥān] on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh) according to which Allah knew from the beginning who would enter Paradise and who would enter Hell, and what human beings would do before they had done it.

We also read in Ṣaḥīḥān on the authority of ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd that after Allah creates someone's body and before breathing life into it, He sends forth an Angel who records the time when the person is destined to die, the type of livelihood he will enjoy, and the actions he will perform, as well as whether he will be blessed or damned. Other ḥadiths such as these will be discussed in the proper place, if Allah wills. This notion of predestination has been decried by the Qadarite sect, which arose during the latter days of the Companions of the Prophet. It has been related that the first person to innovate this sect's teachings in Iraq was a man from Baṣrah by the name of Sībawayh, [originally] a Zoroastrian. His teachings were then passed on to a man named Maʿbad al-Juhanī. It is also said that one of the first events [to inspire this teaching] took place in the Ḥijāz, namely, the burning of the Kaʿbah. After it occurred one man said that it was burned down by Allah's decree, to which someone else replied that no, Allah decreed no such thing! However, during the days of the rightly guided Caliphs, no one ever dared question the notion of divine predestination. So when those of the Qadarite sect first began denying this notion, they were condemned for it by the surviving Companions of the Prophet, among them ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿUmar, ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAbbās, and Wāthilah Ibn al-Asqaʿ. Most supporters of the new teachings were to be found in Baṣrah and Syria, while a few of them resided in the Ḥijāz. The pious ancestors had a great deal to say in criticism of the Qadarite sect; according to Wakīʿ Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, for example, followers of the Qadarite sect hold that the results of Allah's commands will only become manifest in the future, and that Allah did not foreordain what people had written or what they had done. The

Murjiʾites, however, hold that one's words may be separated from what one does, whereas according to the Jahmites, knowledge may be separated from both one's words and one's actions. Concerning all such views, Wakīʿ said: "This, all of this, is unbelief." It was narrated by Ibn. . . .[15]

However, when writings on divine predestination spread and became more well known with the participation of numerous speculative thinkers and others, the majority of those who had embraced the Qadarites' teachings began to accept the notion of divine foreknowledge, although they still denied the absolute Will and Creation. We have two different accounts, on the authority of ʿAmr Ibn ʿUbayd, concerning the denial of the existence of a preexisting Book [i.e., Qurʾān]. This view was denounced by Mālik [Ibn Anas], al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], and others, who declared them [the Qadarites] to be unbelievers on account of it. There are many scholars and others who have written in favor of the notion of divine foreknowledge and whose views have been passed down by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. However, they do not set forth the views of those who advocated this notion. This was the doctrine taught by ḥadith scholars who were also Islamic jurists, such as Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others, namely, that whoever was advocating a heretical teaching deserves to be punished in order that other people may be protected from any harm which he might bring upon them. [This applies even if inwardly, such a person is convinced of the validity of his interpretation and has based it on the four foundations of the Qurʾān, the ḥadith, the consensus of the ijmāʿ, *community,* and qiyās, *analogy*.] The lightest punishment he might receive would be ostracism, so that he would no longer enjoy any status within Islam, his testimony would no longer be accepted, nor would he be consulted or allowed to teach or to be appointed as a judge. The teaching of Mālik [Ibn Anas] is similar to this; hence, compilers of prophetic traditions did not record the views of individuals who were propagating any sort of heretical doctrine. However, they and other scholars did record the views of many who secretly agreed with the teaching of the Qadarites, the Murjiʾites, the Khārijites, the Shīʿites, and others.

Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] once said that if we failed to relate the teachings of the Qadarites, we would be leaving out the views of most of the inhabitants of Baṣrah. This was because the question of whether the actions of human beings are

[15] All the editions consulted indicate that there is a blank here.

"created," and concerning the wills of "creatures," is a problematic one. And just as those Muʿtazilites who held Qadarite views erred in their thinking, so also did many of those who sought to refute their teachings. For in their attempts to refute their views, they followed in the footsteps of Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān and his followers, denying the wisdom of Allah in His acts of creating and commanding, in His Mercy toward His servants, as well as the causes for Creation and Commands. In fact, they so thoroughly repudiated existing realities evident in Allah's creatures and laws that they alienated most prudent thinkers who had understood their claims concerning what they believed to be Orthodox Islam. That is, they were making the claim that the views of Orthodox Muslims on predestination were the same as those introduced by Jahm. This subject is discussed more fully elsewhere.

The point being made here is that in the pious ancestors' efforts to respond to the Murjiʾites, the Jahmites, the Qadarites, and others, they would reject views based on reports that had reached them through individuals who did not always represent the thinking of all members of a given sect, or views based on inaccurate representations of their views. Therefore, they would respond to the Murjiʾites' claim that religion and belief are one and the same based on the assumption that this represented the thinking of all members of the Murjiʾite sect, whereas at a later time, some Murjiʾites arrived at the view that belief is an utterance without taṣdīq and without the inward knowledge of the heart; this view was first introduced by Ibn Karrām, and was held by him alone. As for his other teachings, they had all been introduced by people before him; hence, this was the only view attributed to him alone by those who, like al-Ashʿarī and others, related what people had said on his authority.

As for the other teachings espoused by Ibn Karrām, they have also been attributed to people who came before him, without his name being associated with them. Moreover, Ibn Karrām was not a contemporary of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and other authorities on Islam. Therefore, Abu ʿAbd Allah Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Abu Thawr,[16] and others related that scholars were in unanimous agreement with the views that conflicted with those of Ibn Karrām. The position of the Murjiʾites, who preceded him was that belief is an utterance with one's tongue and taṣdīq in one's heart; as for Jahm's position, it was that taṣdīq is nothing but taṣdīq in the

[16] Abu Thawr, Ibrāhīm al-Kalbī (?–240 A.H.), was a jurist and a close associate of Imām al-Shāfiʿī. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 340.]

heart. Hence, when Ibn Karrām claimed that belief was nothing but an utterance of the tongue, the Murji'ites took three differing positions on the matter. However, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] was more knowledgeable than others concerning the views held by various people; therefore, he was familiar with the Jahmite's views on belief. As for Abu Thawr, he was not familiar with it; in fact, he was well versed only in the teachings of Islamic jurists who held the Murji'ites' views; for this reason, he related that there was a unanimous rejection of the teachings of both the Jahmites' and the Karrāmites' sects.

THE OPINION OF ABU THAWR ON IMAN

In his refutation of the Murji'ites, Abu Thawr says [in an account narrated by Abu al-Qāsim al-Ṭabarī al-Lalakā'ī[17] and others, on the authority of Idrīs Ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm][18] that a man from Khurāsān asked him whether Iman increases and diminishes, and whether it is "words and works" or whether it is "assent and works." To this Abu Thawr replied: "You asked, may Allah have mercy upon you and may He forgive you and forgive us, about what is Iman? Does it increase or diminish? Is it 'words and works' or is it 'assent and works'? I will tell you about the interpretations of the different sects."

You should know, may Allah have mercy upon us and you, that Iman is taṣdīq in the heart and utterance with the tongue, and works of the body. So there is no disagreement among scholars about a man who said that he testifies that there is no god but Allah, that what the Messengers brought is the truth, and who affirms all of Allah's laws. But [covertly] he said that he neither believes in nor accepts what he says, that he is not a Muslim. And if he says that Jesus is Allah, denies Islam, and says that he [covertly] does not believe in what he says, he is an unbeliever, not a believer. Mere verbal testimony, without inward assent, is not Iman; likewise, mere assent, without verbal testimony, is not Iman, for Iman is both assent of the heart and verbal testimony. Accordingly, some sects regard Iman as assent of the heart and verbal testimony with the tongue; whereas other

[17] Abu al-Qāsim al-Ṭabarī al-Lalakā'ī (?–418 A.H.) was a jurist and a scholar of ḥadith. His famous book is entitled *Mādhib ahl al-Sunnah*. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 9, p. 57.]

[18] Idrīs Ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm, Abu al-Ḥassan (?–292 A.H.), was a famous reciter of the Qur'ān and narrated ḥadith from Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 340.]

sects regard it as assent of the heart, verbal testimony, and bodily works. Hence, all the above sects regard Iman as being composed of two or three elements, not one. And all of them agreed that whoever fulfills these three conditions, namely assent of the heart, verbal testimony, and bodily works, is a believer.

Abu Thawr questioned the group of people who argued that works are not part of Iman. He asked, "What does Allah want from His servants when He commands them to establish prayer and give zakah? Does He mean verbal testimony alone, or verbal testimony with works?" If the group said that Allah wanted mere verbal testimony without works, then scholars would charge them with unbelief. Some scholars said that if Allah did not want the people to perform prayer and to give zakah, and if they say that He wanted from them verbal testimony as well as works, it can be said to them, "Why then did you claim that one can be a believer if he only affirms this, although Allah wanted both of these things to be done? Do they regard one as a believer if he does all he was commanded to, without verbal testimony?" If they say no, they may be asked: "Do you regard someone as a believer if he affirms all that he is commanded, but does not do any of it?" If they say yes, one might ask: "What is the difference?" You claimed that Allah wants both verbal testimony and works, and if it is possible for one to be a believer if he abandons one of the two, then it is possible for him to be a believer if he is righteous, without verbal testimony. If they [the same group] object, asking that if a man embraces Islam and affirms the message that the Prophet (pbuh) came with, would he be regarded as a believer with this verbal testimony before the time for work arrives? The answer to him is that he may be called a believer due to his acknowledgment that he must do what he has been commanded when the time comes. However, if he affirms his belief but does not do righteous deed, he will not be called a believer.

Response to the Views of Abu Thawr Concerning Iman

Abu Thawr said that one cannot be a believer unless he consistently does work along with verbal testimony. Otherwise, if he affirms his belief but does not perform works, he will not be a believer. Hence Abu Thawr's claim revealed the necessity of both conditions, verbal testimony and works, for Iman. It also indicates that both conditions are part of religion. Hence one cannot be obedient to Allah, deserving of His reward, or praised by Him and His Messenger unless he

fulfills both conditions. Moreover, his statement refutes the argument that works are excluded from religion as well as from Iman. However, if someone says that works are part of religion and that a sinner is a believer who has taken part of the religion [i.e., Iman] and neglected the rest, his view will be reported differently. But Abu Thawr and other Sunnah jurists offer the same argument. However, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] was more knowledgeable than Abu Thawr. Therefore, Orthodox Muslims unanimously refute the views of the Karrāmites. But Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal did not regard it as certain that the Karrāmites were wrong. Therefore, in his letter to Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Juzjānī,[19] he said he did not think that anyone would say this [the Karrāmites' view]. Aḥmad's statement is reported in *al-Sunnah, The Book of the Sunnah*, by al-Khallāl, which is the most comprehensive book of the sayings of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal on religious issues, even though he discussed other matters in it. Likewise, another of his [al-Khallāl's] books is the most comprehensive book on knowledge; it contains many of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's statements on the subject of jurisprudence.

THE LETTER OF IMĀM AḤMAD IBN ḤANBAL TO AL-JUZJĀNĪ ON THE QUESTION OF IMAN

Al-Marwazī said that he once saw Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Juzjānī with Abu ʿAbd Allah [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal]. Abu ʿAbd Allah had mentioned him prior to this, saying that his father had been a Murjiʾite, or he said that he was a man whose opinion enjoyed respect. As for Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, he spoke highly of him. He had written earlier to Abu ʿAbd Allah from Khurāsān, asking him about belief. He mentioned this letter was based on two sources who had spoken of it on Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥīm's authority and Aḥmad's answer. [The text of Aḥmad's letter follows.]

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, may Allah bless both of us and deliver us from all evil, by His Mercy. I received your letter in which you mentioned the arguments of the Murjiʾites. And you should know (may Allah bless you) that it is not the custom of the Orthodox Muslims to indulge in disputes over religious matters; rather they find themselves obliged to refute others' arguments. You should also know that in interpreting the Qurʾān one should refer

[19] Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Juzjānī (?–245 A.H.) was a jurist and a scholar of ḥadith and corresponded with Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal on religious matters. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 341–42.]

to the Sunnah and the sayings of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) in order to get a clear picture of exactly what Allah means. However, heretical thinkers interpret it without referring to the Sunnah or the sayings of the Companions of the Prophet. For a verse may be specific but have a more general application, or it may sound general, whereas it aims at a specific matter. The Prophet (pbuh) is the best interpreter of the Qur'ān, followed by his Companions who witnessed the revelation of the Book. Hence, one has to refer to them for its interpretation. In other words, a verse may be specific [have a specific referent] although it also has a more general sense. An example is the following verse, in which Allah says: "Allah [thus] directs you as regards to your children's [inheritance]: to the male a portion equal to that of two females . . ." (4:11), which is a specific verse, although it is general enough to include every son or daughter. However, the Prophet's (pbuh) Sunnah came to specify that an unbeliever should never inherit from a Muslim.

Likewise it is related that the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) used not to give an inheritance to someone who had deliberately killed a Muslim. Therefore the Prophet (pbuh) came to clarify that this verse applies only to Muslims, not to unbelievers. On the other hand, whoever interprets it in a general sense has to give an inheritance to every son, even if he is an unbeliever or a killer; and in this case he contradicts what the Prophet (pbuh) said. To conclude, Orthodox Muslims refer to the Sunnah and the sayings of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) to refute the false interpretations of the Qur'ān espoused by heretics, the Khārijites, and the like.

Words such as mujmal, *comprehensive,* muṭlaq, *absolute,* and ʿāmm, *general,* were all included in the terminology used by authorities on Islam, such as al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad, Abu ʿUbayd, Isḥāq and others. When using the term mujmal, *comprehensive,* they do not mean that which cannot be understood from it, which was the incorrect interpretation given by some later thinkers. Rather, the term refers to that which alone is not sufficient for its practical application, even if its apparent sense has been correctly understood. This may be seen in the verse where Allah says: "Take ṣadaqah, *alms,* from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it . . ." (9:103). The surface meaning of this is clear and comprehensible; it is not an obscure verse. However, the meaning it conveys is not sufficient in and of itself for the verse to be carried out in practice. For the action it commands is a gift of charity that will have a purifying effect on them; this,

however, is something we only come to know through the explanation provided by the Messenger (pbuh). For this reason, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal cautions the scholastic theologians dealing in Islamic jurisprudence to apply the following two principles: mujmal, *comprehensive,* and qiyās, *analogy*. According to Aḥmad, the most common errors theologians commit have to do with ta'wīl, *allegorical interpretation,* and qiyās, *analogy.* By this he means that [in interpreting the Qur'ān or other authoritative religious texts], one must not make a judgment based on the most general or absolute sense before considering those factors that restrict and qualify the meaning. Nor should one interpret something on the basis of an analogy or point of comparison with something else before making certain that the meanings conveyed by the texts in question justify such comparisons. For the most widespread errors are due to people's clinging to what they believe to be the meaning of a given term or an analogy between it and something else. For matters open to speculation cannot be translated into action until one has investigated possible conflicting meanings or interpretations with sufficient thoroughness to feel reasonably confident that his conclusions are sound. Whoever has not done so is in error. This, said Aḥmad, is the truth concerning those who cling to superficial interpretations and hasty comparisons. For this reason he considered it a heretical practice to argue on the basis of the apparent meaning of a text while ignoring those interpretations offered by the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions. Moreover, he has devoted an entire book to this subject.

The same thing is true of the practice of holding tightly to the use of certain analogies and parallels while simultaneously failing to make mention of other relevant texts [from the Qur'ān] and the traditions. Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] declared such a practice to be a mark of heresy, and for this reason, all the conclusions at which some people arrived were fallacious. The only sound conclusions they reached were those that were in agreement with the teachings of the pious ancestors and their followers. Allah says: "Allah [thus] directs you as regards to your children's [inheritance] . . ." (4:11), and he [Aḥmad] classified it as a general statement, whereas it is completely unrestricted in personal affairs. He generalized it by way of substitution in the following verse, in which Allah says: ". . . The freeing of [the neck] of a believing slave . . ." (4:92) to apply to all necks. He does not, however, generalize it in the same way that he generalizes the term "boy" in the preceding verse to apply to all boys. And whoever adopts this interpretation could not simultaneously interpret the text of the Qur'ān merely on the basis of its

superficial meaning. Rather, he would interpret it on the basis of the meanings he deduced, not only from what the Qur'ān does say, but also from what it does not say. Hence, the meaning would become apparent [in part] from the Qur'ān's silence on a given matter, not because of the Qur'ān's indication that it is the surface meaning. Hence, they did not hold to the straightforward meanings of the words themselves, but rather to the meanings to which these words point. The foundation on which they based all this is ignorance of the texts that provide evidence of restrictions that may apply to the Qur'ānic passage at hand. However, everything the Qur'ān reveals and manifests is truth, as opposed to some other meaning that may appear correct to someone although it does not reflect what is in the Qur'ān itself. This includes inferences drawn by heretical sects, such as the Murji'ites, the Jahmites, the Khārijites, and the Shī'ites.

THE VIEWS OF THE MURJI'ITES, THE KULLĀBITES AND THE KARRĀMITES ON IMAN AND THE RESPONSE TO THEM

Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] said that whoever claims that Iman is a verbal testimony of belief may be asked what he says about knowledge. Does one need knowledge with verbal testimony in order to be a believer? And does one need to believe in [affirm] what he knows in order to be a believer? If he claims that one need knowledge in addition to verbal testimony in order to be a believer, this means that he claims that Iman consists of two components. And if he holds that one needs verbal testimony, acceptance, and knowledge in order to be a believer, he is claiming that Iman consists of three components. However, if he claims that one needs neither knowledge nor taṣdīq in order to be a believer, he is absolutely wrong. For the absence of knowledge, taṣdīq, and works—all these combined—signals sin and unbelief.

The author says that Aḥmad, Abu Thawr, and other Muslim leaders knew the origin of the Murji'ites' claim that Iman is a single entity, such that it is untrue to say that part of it may leave while the other part stays in one's heart. For Iman can only be one thing [that is, it cannot consist of two or three parts]. Therefore, in order to avoid the partition of Iman, the Jahmites said that Iman is a single thing in the heart, while the Karrāmites said that Iman is a single thing on the tongue.

However, Muslim jurists have provided evidence that refutes the Murji'ites' claim. For example, Abu Thawr refuted the claim of Murji'ite jurists by taking as evidence the unanimous agreement that Iman is taṣdīq and works, despite the fact that he did not receive the statements of their representatives or the opinion of the Jahmites. Their opinion had not yet reached the level of their disagreement. And Aḥmad mentioned that knowledge and taṣdīq must accompany verbal testimony. Moreover, he [Aḥmad] said that whoever denies the necessity of knowledge and taṣdīq has uttered an unacceptable view, the falsity of which may clearly be seen when examined against the teachings of Islam. For this reason no one held this view before the establishment of the Karrāmite sect, even though this sect does not deny the necessity of knowledge and taṣdīq. Rather, they simply hold that such things do not enter into the definition of belief, lest belief be fragmented or multiplied. For they do not believe it is possible for someone to lose part of his belief while retaining part of it, for this requires that the same person have both belief and unbelief in his heart. Hence, they unanimously hold this view, which has been mentioned by al-Ash'arī and others.

This is a fallacious argument, to which many have fallen prey, despite their being sincere Muslims who were individuals of understanding, devotion, reverence, and belief. On account of this, a number of jurists, who were known by the Islamic community to be prudent, pious individuals adopted the Murji'ites' views. For this reason, none of the pious ancestors declared any of these people to be unbelievers; instead, they considered their views to be an innovation involving certain terminology and behaviors, but not a heresy revolving around essential doctrines. For a large part of the dispute over such questions is merely semantic, revolving around the proper term by which to refer to a given entity. But whatever term is consistent with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah is the most appropriate and correct one. For no one has the right to espouse a view that is in conflict with what Allah and His Messenger said, especially when such views were used as pretexts to support the heretical doctrines of scholastic theologians who held the Murji'ites' beliefs, or to justify immoral behavior. In this way, a minor error in terminology has become a cause for a much greater error in both doctrine and practice. For this reason, so much criticism has been leveled against the Murji'ites that Ibrāhīm al-Nakh'ī once said that the dissension and strife introduced by the Murji'ite sect posed a greater threat to the Islamic community than that aroused by the

Azāriqites.[20] And according to al-Zuhrī, there has never arisen a heresy more harmful to Islam and its adherents than that of the Murjiʾites. As for al-Awzāʿī, he stated that Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Kathīr[21] and Qatādah used to say that they could think of no caprice or fancy that would be a greater cause to fear for the Islamic community than the Murjiʾites' teachings. Speaking also of the Murjiʾite sect, Sharīk al-Qāḍī said that they are the most odious of all people. As if the Rāfiḍites[22] were not hateful enough, the Murjiʾites, who told lies against Allah, were worse. And Sufyān al-Thawrī said that the Murjiʾites have left Islam more flimsy than Sābrī's robe. As for Qatādah, he notes that the Murjiʾite sect arose after the insurrection incited by Ibn al-Ashʿath's band of followers.

Once Maymūn Ibn Muhrān was asked about the views held by the Murjiʾites, to which he replied that he would not even deign to speak of them. Once Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr said to Dharr al-Hamadhānī, "Are you not ashamed [to embrace] an opinion that is beneath you?" And Ayyūb al-Sikhtiyānī once stated that the religion of the Murjiʾites was beneath his dignity. The first person ever to voice the Murjiʾites' views was a man of Madīnah, from the tribe of Banū Hāshim, by the name of al-Ḥassan. According to Zādhān,[23] he came to see al-Ḥassan Ibn Muḥammad[24] and said: "What is this book that you have written?" [Since he was the one who had recorded the Murjiʾites' teachings.] He replied: "Oh, Abu ʿUmar, I wish I had died before writing this book and letting it see the light of day! For an error concerning the term 'belief' is not like an error concerning some other word, such as the name of a transmitter of prophetic traditions. After all, the meaning of the terms 'belief,' Islam, 'unbelief,' and 'hypocrisy' have a bearing on judgments pertaining both to this life and the life to come."

[20] The Azāriqites were a subgroup of the Khārijite sect, named after their founder, Nāfiʿ Ibn al-Azraq. This sect held the view that the one who commits a grave sin is eternally in Hellfire and that every grave sin is unbelief.

[21] Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Kathīr (?–129 A.H.) was a leading authority on ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 345 and M. M. Azmi, p.176.]

[22] The Rāfiḍite sect is an extremist Shīʿite subsect.

[23] Zādhān, Abu ʿAmr al-Kindī (?–82 A. H.), was a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith but transmitted very few ḥadiths. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 346.]

[24] Al-Hassan Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah (?–101 A.H.) was a pious man who did not take a position concerning the affairs of Caliph ʿUthmān, Caliph ʿAlī, Ṭalḥah, and al-Zubayr; however, the matter should be left in a state of irjāʾ *adjournment,* for Allah to decide on. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 346.]

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal made a distinction between the knowledge that resides in the heart and the taṣdīq that resides in the heart. For the verbal testimony uttered by the tongue is taṣdīq. He thus mentioned three things [i.e., inward knowledge, inward belief, and outward testimony], whereas this includes only two. That is, one may distinguish between taṣdīq in one's heart and knowledge in one's heart, which is consistent with the views of Ibn Kullāb, al-Qilānisī, al-Ash'arī, and his followers, since they distinguished between knowledge of the heart and taṣdīq of the heart. Taṣdīq is the heart's utterance. And utterance of the heart, according to them, is not knowledge but rather another type [of entity]. Therefore Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] asked: "Does [belief] require both knowledge and verbal testimony? Does it require that one believe that which he has come to know? For if one claims that it requires both knowledge and verbal testimony, then he is claiming that belief consists of two things. And if one says that it requires that one both confess and believe in what he has come to know, then belief consists of three things. But if one denies [that it requires any of these things], saying: 'It requires neither knowledge nor taṣdīq,' then he has committed a grave error. For I can hardly imagine anyone who would deny the necessity of both knowledge and taṣdīq."

There are those who say that belief is verbal testimony, while testimony with the tongue implies that the tongue is likewise affirming the truth of what it confesses. The Murji'ites were in agreement that verbal testimony with the tongue implied such assent, knowing that what it meant is that taṣdīq and knowledge in one's heart go along with an outward acknowledgment with the tongue. However, one might say that what is meant is assent of the heart, both in one's heart and with one's tongue, along with knowledge and verbal testimony. As for the term "testimony," it refers to commitment, not mere assent of the truth of something. Allah says: "And [remember] when Allah took the Covenant of the Prophets, 'Take what ever I gave you from the Book and Wisdom, and afterwards there will come to you a Messenger [Muḥammad] confirming what is with you; you must believe in him and help him.' Allah says: 'Do you agree [to it] and will you take up my Covenant?' They said: 'We agree.' He says: 'Then bear witness; and I am with you among the witnesses'" (3:81). For the covenant was made with them based on the assumption that they believed in it and supported it, for this is what they were commanded to do. But this verbal testimony is not the same as taṣdīq, for Allah has made no declaration of truth to them for them to believe or affirm. Rather, He charges them with the obligation to believe in and support His

Messenger if he should come to them. Hence, they affirm the truth of this verbal testimony and commit themselves to it. This, then, is their verbal testimony. And someone might acknowledge the Prophet in the sense that he commits himself to obeying whatever commands he received from the Prophet without actually having inward knowledge or taṣdīq that he is the Messenger of Allah. However, none of the Murjiʾites ever said that this sort of verbal testimony is belief. Rather, there has to be a verbal testimony of the validity of a specific declaration of truth; that is, one must acknowledge that he is the Messenger of Allah. Hence, the term iqrār, *confession,* implies both commitment and taṣdīq, both of which are necessary. On the other hand, by "verbal testimony" one might mean mere taṣdīq without a commitment to obey. The Murjiʾites sometimes considered this to be belief [that is, verbal testimony in the sense of belief without a pledge to obey], while at other times they defined belief as both taṣdīq and commitment together. This latter type of verbal testimony was the type spoken of by the Murjiʾite scholars, who defined it as they did belief. Otherwise, if one were to say: "I obey him, though I do not believe that he is the Messenger of Allah," or, "I believe that he is the Messenger of Allah, but I make no commitment to obey him," he would neither be a Muslim nor a believer in their view.

Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] added that this verbal testimony must be accompanied by assent, knowledge, and acceptance of what one knows [the last portion was recorded in another place as "acceptance of what he affirms"]. This entails inward acceptance, which may imply both verbal testimony and works. In this case his heart's acceptance implies that, besides his heart's knowledge of the Prophet (pbuh) as a Messenger of Allah, he submitted to him and followed his teachings; hence he has shown acceptance and veneration of the Prophet's (pbuh) teachings in his heart. Otherwise, mere inner knowledge that he is a Messenger of Allah is not considered Iman. Accordingly, Iman entails the knowledge of the heart as well as its works. So, by acceptance Aḥmad meant that in addition to knowledge of the Prophet (pbuh), the heart accepts and desires to follow his teachings. And, according to Aḥmad, he who denies the fact that deeds are part of Iman is exactly like him who denies the fact that knowledge is part of it. However, the Book, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the Islamic community affirm that Iman entails knowledge of the heart as well as its works. Whoever among the Jahmite sect argued that the heart's obedience is part of belief is like some member of the

Karrāmite sect who argued that knowledge in one's heart is part of belief. Hence, referring to Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal's] statement this makes the most sense in light of what he said in this context.

Moreover, the difference between the heart's knowledge and mere taṣdīq in the heart, which is not accompanied by submission, is so subtle that most people of knowledge cannot perceive it. Most wise people deny this, which indicates that there is a difference between knowledge and acceptance. They said that the claims made by Ibn Kullāb and al-Ash῾arī concerning this distinction were groundless. And in fact, many of al-Ash῾arī's followers acknowledged the absence of any real distinction. To support their view, they cited the example of a report given by someone who is lying. Such a person, they said, has knowledge in his heart that conflicts with this report. This they took as evidence for the existence of a distinction [between knowledge in one's heart, and the heart's belief]. Others objected to their view, saying that it was based on the assumption that there is a khabar, *report [in one's mind],* which is not true, as well as knowledge, which is not true knowledge. And since they demonstrated this on the basis of a statement of the heart that conflicts with both one's knowledge and one's will, then this simply indicates different types of knowledge and will, not some other entity that stands in conflict with them.

Therefore it has been said that someone may not have a report in his mind that conflicts with what he knows, even though he may convey such a report with his tongue. However, it is not possible for one to have a report in his mind without his having knowledge of it, or one that conflicts with what he knows. And this is one of the pieces of evidence upon which people have based their belief in the inconceivability that falsehood or lies could inhere in Allah's essence, for He is knowledgeable of all things, and it is impossible that some meaning should exist in contradiction to knowledge that exists in the mind of the knower. For a false report existing within the mind is the opposite of knowledge.

Now it may be said that if a report existing within the mind were in conflict with knowledge, then this would mean that it was possible for knowledge to exist together with its opposite, as has been stated by others in numerous places. It was the most powerful of the arguments put forth by al-Qāḍī Abu Bakr on the question of al-῾aql, *reason,* and other issues. Others who held a similar view included al-

Qāḍi Abu Yaʿlā, Abu Muḥammad Ibn al-Labbān,[25] Abu ʿAlī Ibn Shādhān,[26] Abu al-Ṭayyib,[27] Abu al-Walīd al-Bājī,[28] Abu al-Khaṭṭāb,[29] Ibn ʿAqīl, and others. They stated that reason is a type of knowledge, since it is not in conflict with it. For if it were not a type of knowledge, then it would necessarily be in contradiction to it, and if it were in contradiction to it, then it would be possible for it to exist alongside the opposite of reason. Although this argument is weak [having been weakened by the masses as well as by Abu al-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī and others], it is true that if something is necessarily accompanied by some other entity, then it cannot be its opposite. Neither can it be the very same type of entity, but rather must contrast with it. This is based on a terminological system according to which they classify every pair of entities according to whether they are mathalayn, *identical,* khilāfayn, *in contrast to one another,* or ḍiddayn, *opposites.* For the relationship between one entity and another entity, which is necessarily associated with it, is like the relationship between the will and knowledge, or between knowledge and life. In other words, these are pairs of entities that are neither identical to each other, nor are they opposites; rather, they contrast with one another. Nevertheless, an entity in which something else inheres by necessity cannot exist along with something that is the opposite of one of its essential properties, since this "something" would preclude the first entity's existence. Moreover, when one entity is necessarily associated with another, the former cannot exist without the latter; for example, the will cannot exist without knowledge, nor can knowledge exist without life. Such pairs represent contrasting but inseparable entities such that neither of the two members of the pair could exist together with the other member's opposite.

Similarly, knowledge is necessarily associated with reason, or the ʿaql, *mind.* For every being capable of knowing is a being endowed with a mind, that is, with

[25] Abu Muḥammad, Ibn al-Labbān (?–446 A.H.), was a jurist and a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 349 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 4, p. 226.]

[26] Abu ʿAlī, Ibn Shādhān (?–426 A. H.), was a Ḥanafite jurist and a scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 349.]

[27] Abu al-Ṭayyib, Ṭāhir Ibn ʿAbd Allah (-?–450 A. H.), was a leading *Sh*āfiʿī jurist of his time and wrote several important books on the Shāfiʿī school of law, such as *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyyah.* [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 349 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 321.]

[28] Al-Bājī, Abu al-Walīd Sulaymān (?–474 A. H.), was a famous Mālikī jurist and a scholar of ḥadith. [Al-Ziriklī, vol. 3, p. 186.]

[29] Abu al-Khaṭṭāb, Maḥfūẓ Ibn Aḥmad (?–510 A. H.), was a leading Ḥanbalī jurist. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 349.]

reason. Moreover, the mind is a condition of knowledge, being neither identical with it, nor its opposite, nor one type of knowledge. Neither can knowledge exist together with any entity that contradicts reason. But this argument is used with respect to knowledge that exists alongside the inward speech, which is a report [existing within the mind]. For it [knowledge] is neither the opposite [of the report] nor identical to it; rather, it simply contrasts with it. Therefore, knowledge may in fact exist alongside that which is the opposite of a report, be it true or false. Hence, one may see the falsehood of the argument, that it is impossible for a lie to exist within the mind of a person with knowledge.

What is meant here is that one finds it difficult to differentiate between his knowledge that the Prophet (pbuh) was truthful, and his mere acceptance in his heart, without works, that this is true. Aḥmad provided many pieces of evidence to prove that works are part of Iman. He said that a delegation of the people of ʿAbd al-Qays asked the Prophet (pbuh) about Iman. The Prophet (pbuh) answered: "Iman is testifying to the fact that there is no god but Allah, that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, the establishment of prayer, giving of zakah, fasting during Ramaḍān, and paying one-fifth of the spoils that falls to your lot." Hence he [the Prophet, pbuh] considered all these to be parts of Iman. The Prophet (pbuh) also said: "Modesty is an aspect of Iman;" and "The best believer is the one with the best morals;" and "Indeed, cleanliness is part of Iman;" and "Iman has over seventy branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious from the path;" and "Bring out of the Fire whoever has [in his heart] an atom's weight of Iman." It was also reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said, concerning the attributes of the hypocrite: "There are three traits that, if one possesses them, make him a sheer hypocrite." Furthermore, in many verses of the Qur'ān, Allah says that Iman may increase. Allah says: "It is He Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers, that they may add belief to their belief . . ." (98:4); and ". . . In order that the People of the Book may arrive at certainty, and the believers may increase in belief . . ." (74:31); and He also says: ". . . And when they hear His Signs rehearsed, find their belief strengthened . . ." (8:2); and "Whenever there comes down a Sūrah [Chapter] some of them say: 'Which of you has had his belief increased by it?' Yes, those who believe, their belief is increased, and they do rejoice" (9:124); and "Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their

belongings and their persons in the Cause of God: such are the sincere ones" (49:15); and ". . . But if they repent and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them . . ." (9:5); and "But [even] if they repent, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, they are your brethren in belief. . ." (9:11); and He also says: "And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true [in belief]; to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity; and that is the Religion Right and Straight" (98:5).

Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] said that one ought to say that he is a believer by his own confession even if he acknowledges the right to giving zakah in its totality yet will not find in every two dirhams, five, he is considered a believer. It follows that works are part of Iman and that Iman is not mere taṣdīq. For one may claim that he is a believer but at the same time pray to the cross, go to churches, and commit other sins. To this the author replies that the many pieces of evidence Aḥmad cited in order to refute the claim of the Jahmites did not charge one with [covert] unbelief if he committed overt sins. Rather, they said that such works signal one's unbelief by worldly standards. However, if one cited authorized pieces of evidence that affirm that, in the Hereafter, such a man is also regarded as an unbeliever, they [the Jahmites] would argue that such pieces of evidence indicate that such a man has no knowledge about Allah. Hence they explicitly contradicted both sound reason and Islamic legislation.

Despite the indefensibility of this claim, either on the basis of reason or Islamic law, and despite the fact that, upon close examination, it fails to establish [an understanding of] belief, those who espouse it have made belief out to be a unified, indivisible entity devoid of any real existence. It is reminiscent of the claim made by members of the Jahmite sect and others with similar views concerning the unity of Allah, Whom they said is an Essence without attributes. They also held that the Qur'ān was created, that Allah may not be seen in the afterlife, and that speech and other [divine] attributes are all unified and inseparable.

Their claims with regard to Allah, the divine attributes, divine speech, and belief in Allah may all be traced back to a doctrine of utter divestiture, stripping the Godhead of all attributes whatsoever. Moreover, this is an error into which many sects fell, including later ones that traced their origins back to Orthodox Islam,

Islamic jurisprudence, and the study of the prophetic traditions in accordance with the views of the founders of the four schools of Orthodox Islam [i.e., Abu Ḥanīfah, al-Shāfiʿī, Mālik Ibn Anas, and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal]. Nevertheless, some of these sects held extremist Murjiʾite, Jahmite, and Muʿtazilite views; and in their ignorance of the facts out of which such heresies arose, they continued seeking to combine teachings that are irreconcilable opposites. However, it is a sign of Allah's mercy that Islamic leaders such as Mālik, al-Shafiʿī, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Abu Ḥanīfah, al-Thawrī, al-Awzaʿī, al-Layth Ibn Saʿd, Isḥaq, Abu Ubayd, Abu Yūsuf, and Muḥammad used to refute the claims of the Jahmites about the Qurʾān, Iman, and the divine attributes of the Lord. And they were in agreement, like the pious ancestors, that Allah will be seen in the Hereafter; that the Qurʾān is the Word of Allah, it has not been created; and Iman must have taṣdīq of the heart and the tongue. Hence, if one cursed Allah and His Messenger, everyone agrees that he was an unbeliever, both inwardly and outwardly. As for those who agreed with Jahm's views on belief, having acceded to the arguments put forth by Abu al-Ḥassan concerning belief, they sometimes adopted the views of the pious ancestors and other authoritative figures of Orthodox Islam, while at other times they adopted the views of the scholastic theologians who held the same position as Jahm. On the question concerning the person who curses Allah and the Prophet, there is a subsect of the Ḥanbalites, Shafiʿites, and Mālikites who held that such behavior was utter unbelief, both outwardly and inwardly.

On the other hand, the same individuals might voice the views of those who agreed with Jahm, saying that such behavior appeared on the surface to be unbelief, though inwardly this person might be a believer with perfect belief. For belief in Jahm's view cannot be partitioned [that is, one either has perfect belief, or no belief at all]. For this reason, when al-Qāḍī ʿAyyāḍ learned that some of his disciples took this position, he denounced it and brilliantly expounded arguments in support of the views of Mālik and the Orthodox Muslims.

I have presented points relevant to this topic in my book entitled *al-Ṣārim al-Maslūl ʿalā al-Shātim al-Rasūl.* You will also find them making reference to the views of Islam's authoritative scholars and the pious ancestors on questions relating to belief, and setting forth the discussion presented by the Jahmites and their followers, since they took this discussion from the writings of scholastic theologians who supported Jahm's views on issues pertaining to belief.

In his book entitled *Manāqib al-Shāfiʿī* [The Virtues of al-Shāf ʿī] al-Rāzī mentioned [al-Shāfiʿī's] position on belief, which is the same as that of the Companions of the Prophet and their Successors. According to al-Shāfiʿī, the view he espoused was held unanimously by the Prophet's Companions and their Successors. However, those who have encountered al-Shāfiʿī's view have found it to be quite dubious. The reason for this is that al-Shāfiʿī was influenced by the fallacious argument put forward by the Khārijites, the Muʿtazilites, the Jahmites, the Karrāmites, and the Murjiʾites concerning belief; namely that if any part of a compound entity is removed, then the entire entity must cease to exist. However, he only made mention of the superficial elements of this argument. Moreover, one need find no difficulty in refuting their views. For it is taken for granted that when it comes to something like a social body, for example, such an entity may not retain all the parts of which it was once comprised. However, the loss of some of its components does not necessitate the loss of the entity as a whole.

Al-Shafiʿī, the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh), the Successors, and the rest of the pious ancestors said that a sin harms the perfection of Iman. Therefore, the Prophet (pbuh) negated the Iman of sinners so long as they committed sins. According to them, negation of Iman meant that some of it leaves [the heart] and some of it remains [in the heart].

However, the Murjiʾites had an aversion to the term "decrease," if attributed to Iman. For the Murjiʾites [who said that Iman is one thing], and the Khārijites and Muʿtazilites [who said that Iman has two constituents], said that Iman being decreased means its removal from the heart. Indeed, they applied the same principle to the Oneness of Allah, and the Oneness of His Attributes.

It is interesting to note that the root of the Jahmites and Murjiʾites mistakes was their belief that Iman and unbelief cannot coexist in a single person's heart. Abu al-Ḥassan al-Ashʿarī stated that Muslims unanimously agreed on this belief. However, on account of this false belief they erred. Indeed, more than one Muslim leader mentioned that the pious ancestors unanimously agreed upon charging with unbelief those who said, like the Jahmites, that Iman is mere acceptance.

There are many counterparts to this; for someone may make a statement that is actually inconsistent with both the text [of the Qurʾān and other sacred writings], and the consensus of the Islamic community, believing all the while that he is

being faithful to both. He does this based on the degree of knowledge and expertise in interpretation he possesses. Hence, he will be forgiven for his failure to know the correct interpretation underlying the text. So when some mistakenly believed that the belief required of all people is of a single type, some of them came to assume that this type of belief in and of itself cannot vary in degree or quality from one individual to the next. Hence, someone once said to me that belief as such can neither increase nor decrease. I replied that I noted that he used the term "as such," as when one says: "a human being as such is a human being," "an animal as such is an animal," "existence as such is existence," "blackness as such is blackness," and such other things as this. In cases like these, we are speaking of concepts that do not, in fact, increase or decrease or vary in degree. For this person was stating that the entities to which he was referring had a sort of absolute, unqualified existence abstracted from all restrictions or specific characteristics. However, entities such as these have no objective existence; rather, they are entities that one envisions or conceptualizes in his mind. For example, one might conceptualize something that has neither existed from all eternity nor come into existence at some point in time; likewise, he might imagine something that is neither self-existent nor dependent for its existence on something outside itself. He might envision a human being who is neither existent nor nonexistent, saying that the essence [of something] as such is characterized neither by existence nor by nonexistence. Something's essence in and of itself is something conceived by the mind; therefore, it exists within the mind, but not outside it. As for the conceptualization of something that exists neither in the mind nor outside it, this is an impossibility. This type of conceptualization occurs only in the mind, as does that of any other impossibility, such as the world's having been created by more than one being. Conceptualizations such as these exist nowhere but in the mind.

Similar to this would be to imagine a kind of belief that is abstracted from any particular believer, a belief stripped of all qualifications or restrictions; or to conceptualize a person who neither exists nor does not exist. For the fact is that there has never been any belief that existed in isolation from some particular believer or group of believers. Nor has there ever existed a kind of "humanness" apart from some human being to embody it. For every human being has a humanness that specifically pertains to him, and every believer has a belief that belongs specifically to him as well. Zayd's humanness resembled that of ʿAmr, yet is not identical to it. And if the two of them participated in the category of

"human," then this means that they resembled one another in certain outwardly discernible characteristics, while at the same time they both participated in an abstract universal [that is, "humanness"] that exists only in the mind.

Likewise one might say that Zayd's belief was similar to that of ʿAmr's, while at the same time each one's belief belongs to him alone. Hence, if we supposed that everyone's belief were alike, then every believer would still have a belief specific to him alone. It would not be "belief as such," but rather a particular belief that may increase [or diminish]. As for those who deny that there can be any gradation in belief, they are imagining a kind of absolute, abstract belief, the way one might imagine an "absolute, abstract man" or an "absolute existence" stripped of all specific characteristics. From here they go on to make the assumption that this sort of belief, which admits of no variation, gradation, or complexity, is the sort that exists in people. However, the reality is that this sort of belief is a mere conceptualization that exists solely in the mind. For this reason, many of the people who view belief in this manner believe that entities that have facets in common with one another are identical in every person and essence. This view finally led a group of erudite and pious scholars to conclude that the same applies to existence as well. They thus imagined that all existing entities share in common in the reality referred to as existence. And, picturing this in their imaginations, they supposed that this "existence" they had conceptualized was to be found outside themselves as much as within their own minds. Then they came to believe that this existence was Allah [Himself], and came to think of Allah as this existence, which is not objective, but is only to be found within the mind of the one who conceives of it. Similarly, many philosophers have conceptualized abstract numbers and realities, which they call the platonic forms, as well as an abstract time stripped of all motion or movers, and dimensions in isolation from bodies and their characteristics. From here they went on to imagine that such entities possessed a kind of objective existence, thereby confusing what has independent existence with that which exists in the mind alone. Such people might consider "one" to be "two," and "two" to be "one." For example, sometimes when dealing with objective entities characterized by variety and gradation, they would depict them as being uniform or homogeneous, while at other times they would take something with objective existence such as an animal, a place, or a point in time and treat a single entity as if it were two. For example, philosophers and followers of the Jahmite sect erred by taking [pairs of] divine attributes such as the

Lord's knowledge and power and treating each one of the two as if it were identical with the other, as well as identifying the attribute with the entity in which the attribute inheres.

The same is applicable to the one who said that Iman is one thing that is invariable among people. That is, he erred in saying that it is one thing. Also, he erred in saying that it is the same from one person to the next. They also made similar errors when discussing the Oneness of Allah, His Attributes, and the Qur'ān. Thus the error of Jahm and his followers, concerning Iman, is similar to their error concerning the attributes of the Lord, of Whom the believers believe in His Words and His Attributes. We seek refuge with the Almighty of what the wrongdoers are saying.

Just as blackness and whiteness vary in degree, so also do other attributes. Moreover, the mind accepts and perceives such variations. Hence, the heart's knowledge also varies among people. Around all these questions disputes have arisen. Hence, one group that traced its origins back to Orthodox Islam denied that such things are subject to gradation or variation. Al-Qāḍi Abu Bakr, Ibn ʿAqīl and others also held this view.

Two views have been attributed to Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] on the question of whether inward knowledge is subject to variation. One of the teachings of the Murji'ites was the repudiation of the notion that such attributes were subject to gradation or change; however, this view was also held by those who disagreed with the Murji'ites' teachings. Such people claim that variation or gradation is only to be found in people's outward actions, whereas the belief found in one's heart may not vary or change. However, this is not the case; the fact is that both inward belief and outward actions may vary and exist in differing degrees. They [the Murji'ites] said that unlike the heart's knowledge, the heart's deeds vary among people. However, this is untrue. For the Iman of the heart varies as a result of differences in the heart's knowledge as well as its deeds. Although all Muslims were required to have Iman, once the Islamic law was established, the necessity of Iman in a certain matter came to depend upon: hearing about the matter if it is a report, doing it if it is a command, and knowing it if it is knowledge. It is not obligatory for every Muslim to hear, know, and interpret every matter reported in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. For indeed, nobody is able attain this. Hence, people differ in the Iman required of them, as well as in ability and knowledge. That is,

some people know about detailed Iman and some know about overall, general Iman. Some possess strong ability, some possess weak ability. Some have a high degree of resolve, some have a low degree. Accordingly, those who know about detailed Iman and those who know about general Iman are unequal. Likewise, people differ in deeds of the heart such as love for Allah and His Messenger, the fear of Allah, the trust they put in Allah, the praise they bestow on Allah, and the sincerity of their deeds. And whoever denies such differences is either ignorant or stubborn.

According to Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], if they [the Murjiʾites] claimed that they did not accept the idea that Iman could increase due to a lack of knowledge about this increase in Iman [since it is indeterminate], then what did they say about the Prophets of Allah, His Books, and His Messenger? Did they believe in them and claim that this belief is part of Iman? If they said yes, then they might have been asked: "Can you find them and know their number? Did you not affirm your belief in the Messengers without knowing their exact number?" The same is true of the increase in Iman. To put it differently, Aḥmad indicated that their lack of knowledge about the maximum increase in Iman need not have prevented them from affirming in general that it can occur. This is identical to their belief in the Messengers and the Books, although they lacked knowledge about the number of the Messengers and the Books. Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr as well as others said that they did not know the number of the Messengers and the Books, and that the ḥadith of Abu Dharr, concerning this matter, did not confirm it to them.

If anyone equates Islam and Iman by saying that Allah employs the terms Iman and Islam to refer to the same reality, he is indeed wrong in this saying. For Allah and His Messenger interpreted Iman as having belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Hereafter. Allah and His Messenger also indicated that performing what Allah commands is considered part of Iman. However, Allah does not refer to having belief in His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and in the Resurrection after death by the term Islam. Rather, He calls Islam submission to Allah in one's heart and an intent, besides being loyal to religion and doing what one is commanded to do, such as establishing regular prayers and giving zakah, for the sake of Allah alone. Indeed, the latter is what He calls Islam, which He considers the only acceptable religion. Allah says: "If any one desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him . . ."

(3:85). Islam, as stated in this verse, does not include the constituents of Iman, such as having belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. Nor does it include the deeds of the heart, such as the love of Allah and His Messengers. Rather, these are considered parts of Iman, and they characterize the believing Muslim. However, even if they do characterize him, this does not necessarily mean that they are components of Islam. Rather, they are components of Iman. Although Iman as well as Islam are obligations, Islam is included in Iman. Hence, whoever fulfills the obligatory Iman would necessarily fulfill all obligatory deeds for Islam. Also, if someone fulfills the requirements of Islam, this does not necessarily mean that he has fulfilled the requirements of Iman, unless there is other evidence of this [that is, evidence other than the fact that he is called Muslim]. It has been indicated that those whom Allah praises as Muslims, such as the Prophets and their Successors up to the disciples of Christ, were all believers and Muslims. Allah says: ". . . We believe in Allah, and do you bear witness that we are Muslims?" (3:52). Allah also says: "And behold! I inspired the disciples to have belief in Me and My Messenger. They said: 'We have belief and do you bear witness that we bow to Allah as Muslims?'" (5:111). That is why Allah orders us to be both Muslims and believers. He says "Say you: We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismāʿīl, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to [all] Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them. And we bow to Allah [in Islam]. So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right path; but if they turn back, it is they who are in schism, but Allah will suffice you against them, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing" (2:136–37). In another verse, Allah says: "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers" (3:85).

The above-mentioned verses indicate that if anyone desires a religion other than Islam, his deed will not be accepted [by Allah], and he will be a loser in the Hereafter. Accordingly, one must desire the religion of Islam only, and none other. This does not imply that what we call religion is, exactly, what we call Iman. For Allah commands us to say: "We believe in Allah," and He also commands us to say: "We are Muslims." That is, He commands us to abide by these two commands. So, how can we consider them [Islam and Iman] to be one thing?

Those who consider Islam and Iman to be one thing either say that the two words are synonymous, which means that there is a repetition, while in fact the two

words have different meanings; or they may say: "Indeed, one of the two words designates a characteristic that could not be designated by the other word, as in the case of the names of Allah and the names of His Book." However, even this interpretation does not require that we be commanded to fulfill both of them. Rather, it requires that it be described sometimes with one word and sometimes with the other. One should not say, for example, that Allah commands you to establish five prayers and the obligatory prayer. Moreover, conjunction by adjectives takes place if we intend to highlight characteristics that are praiseworthy or blameworthy, as in Allah's saying: "Glorify the Name of the Guardian Lord, most High, Who has created and further given order and proportion, Who has ordained laws and granted guidance" (87:1–3). So, it cannot be said that you pray to your Lord, most High, as well as to your Lord who has created and given order and proportion [as if these were two different activities].

Muhammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī (may Allah have mercy upon him) said that Allah declared in His Book and the Sayings of His Messenger that Islam and Iman are not distinct entities. Hence, whoever has submitted himself to Allah believes in Him, and whoever believes in Allah submits himself to Allah and embraces Islam. And whoever fasts, prays, and fulfills the religious obligations that Allah commands, and forbids what Allah prohibits, fulfills the required Islam and Iman. And if anyone fails to perform some of the obligatory acts or commits what is prohibited, he will not cease to be called a believer or a Muslim. However, he will have less Iman or Islam than someone else. For his Islam and Iman have decreased, but his acknowledgment that "Allah is Truth and says nothing but the truth" has not decreased. However, his Iman, which is the glorification of Allah, submission to His Majesty, Bounty, and Honor, and obedience to the One in Whom he believes [Allah], has decreased.

What al-Marwazī mentioned above indicates that whoever fulfilled the required Iman has fulfilled the required Islam. However, this does not mean that whoever has fulfilled the required Islam has fulfilled the required Iman. His [al-Marwazī's] claim that whoever believes in Allah and has submitted to Him is true, but this does not indicate that whoever submits to Allah has Iman in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, and in the Resurrection after death. Moreover, al-Marwazī's claim that Allah and His Messenger declared that Islam and Iman are inseparable is true, if he meant that Allah commands both of them and forbids

us to separate them. However, his saying is untrue, if he meant that Allah made the terms Iman and Islam refer to the same reality. For the Book and the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) oppose this meaning. Besides, there is no evidence that indicates that the referent of the term Iman and the referent of the term Islam are the same.

Moreover, al-Marwazī's claim that "whoever performs what he is commanded to do and refrains from doing what he is forbidden to do has fulfilled Iman and Islam" is correct, if he performs what he is commanded to do both outwardly and inwardly. In this case it is true to say that he fulfilled the required Islam and Iman. However, his Iman and Islam are not necessarily equal to that of people with determination, such as al-Khalīl Ibrāhīm, the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh), the Seal of the Prophets, and others of Allah's Messengers.

Furthermore, al-Marwazī claims that if anyone fails to fulfill all of the required Iman and Islam, the terms Muslim and "believer" will not be taken away from him. To this the author replies that if he [al-Marwazī] meant that such a man would still have some Islam and Iman, then his claim is correct, for the texts support his claim and oppose the opinions of the Khārijites and Muʿtazilites. However, if al-Marwazī meant that such a man would be called a Muslim and a believer without restrictions in a context of praise or promise of entering Heaven, then his claim is incorrect, for it opposes what is in the Book and the Sunnah. For if this is the case, then such a person would be included in Allah's saying: "Allah has promised to believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein . . ." (9:72), and with similar righteous people who were promised to enter Paradise without punishment.

In addition he [al-Marwazī] said that the Prophet denied, in numerous places, that such a name may be applied to them. In fact, he said [in one prophetic tradition]: "To fight against a believer is unbelief," and "Do not revert to being unbelievers after [having believed in me], seeking one another's death." And if one were to object on the basis of the verse where Allah says: "And if two parties among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you [all] against the one that which rebels until it complies with the command of Allah; then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Indeed! Allah loves those who are equitable" (49:9). One might reply that all these individuals were described with the use of a qualification indicating that they had done these things,

as a reminder of what they themselves have been commanded to do, and what others have been commanded to do.

Someone might say that there could be no decrease with respect to their testimony that Allah exists and that what He says is truth. But rather one might reply that the decrease may exist in their inward belief as it pertains to their knowledge and understanding. Hence, their knowledge and their belief in Allah, the Divine Names, the Divine Attributes, and the things that Allah says by way of commands and prohibitions, promises and threats, would not be [exactly] like the knowledge and belief of others. It would not fully resemble it in its overall form and minute details, nor with respect to strength and weakness, or mindfulness and neglect. But all such things do enter into the definition of belief in Allah and the message He sent with His Messenger. This being the case, how could everyone's inward belief in Allah, the Divine Names, or the Divine Attributes be identical? And how could one possibly claim that belief in Allah's omniscience, omnipotence, forgiveness and mercy, almighty power and wisdom, and stern recompense of evil is not a part of belief in Him? For no Muslim may say that belief in such things forms no part of belief in Allah, nor would he claim that everyone's belief in these matters is exactly the same.

Also, al-Marwazī's statement that "Islam decreases just as Iman does" is correct, for it is supported by the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh). Hence, if someone's prayer, zakah, fasting, or pilgrimage is not fulfilled completely, his Islam is likewise not complete. And whoever says, "Islam is mere verbal testimony, and does not increase or decrease," is mistaken. Also, those who say that Islam and Iman are the same are mistaken. Indeed, their claim about Islam is similar to that of the Murjiʾites about Iman.

Due to the above-mentioned dispute and discussion, the sect was divided into three distinct groups with regard to Iman and Islam. The first group, the Murjiʾites, said that Islam is better [than Iman], for it implies Iman. The second group said that Iman and Islam are the same. This group included the Muʿtazilites, the Khārijites, and a group of Orthodox Muslims and scholars of the ḥadith. It should be mentioned that Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī attributed this claim to all the people of the ḥadith, which is incorrect. The third group said that Iman is better and more complete [than Islam]. This view, indeed, is supported by the Book and the Sunnah, as well as the sayings of the Companions and their Successors.

There are also some people who say that Islam is mere qawl, *utterance* [saying that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger], and that works are not part of Islam. However, what is true is that Islam is all outward works. Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] denied that isti<u>th</u>nā', *exception,* is based on the statement by al-Zuhrī, who said that it [Iman] is the kalimah, *testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger,* which in turn was the opinion of al-A<u>th</u>ram, al-Maymūnī, and others. However, he [Aḥmad] did not choose the opinion of those who said that Islam is an utterance. This means that it is possible to apply "exception" to Islam in the same way it is applied to Iman. Thus, a person cannot decide whether he is able to do everything that he is commanded to do concerning Islam. If the Prophet (pbuh) said that a Muslim is someone from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are protected, and that Islam is built on five pillars, this indicates that Islam means performing the five pillars diligently. This is indeed supported by Allah's saying: "Oh, you who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly . . ." (2:208). That is, abide by all the laws of Islam.

Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others among the pious ancestors have interpreted the statement that the term Iman is included in the term Islam. They said that if what is meant by Islam is mere kalimah, *testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger,* then there is no need to add the words "if Allah wills" when one says that he is a Muslim, as stated by Aḥmad and others. This will be discussed fully in the next chapter. However, if Islam means performing all the outward obligations, then one must add the words "if Allah wills" when stating that one is a Muslim, just as he must when he states that he is a believer. Therefore, he who testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger, becomes a Muslim, distinguished from the Jews and the Christians, and the rules of Islam become applicable to him, as they are to other Muslims. This is, indeed, the case with no exceptions. That is why al-Zuhrī said that Islam is kalimah, *the testimony,* with which Aḥmad and others agreed. However, when Aḥmad agreed with this, he did not mean that obligatory Islam is a mere utterance of the creed [namely, without works]. For al-Zuhrī was very knowledgeable concerning Islam, and such a matter would not be unknown to him. This was clarified in the saying of Aḥmad that Islam is not a mere utterance of belief. It is also illustrated in the question al-A<u>th</u>ram asked Aḥmad, that if a man says, "I am a Muslim," must he add "in <u>sh</u>ā'a Allah, *if Allah wills?*" Aḥmad

replied no, it is not necessary for him to say "if Allah wills" if he says he is a Muslim. Al-Athram asked if it is acceptable to call him a Muslim when one knows that other Muslims are not protected from his hands and tongue? One should remember that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are protected." Aḥmad replied that he knows that not all people are safe from him, and then he mentioned the ḥadith of Muʿmmar, on the authority of al-Zuhrī, which declares that Islam is kalimah and Iman is works.

Hence, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] made clear that if Islam is understood to be a kalimah, *testimony,* then there is no need for someone who claims to be a Muslim to add the phrase, "if Allah wills." And if the term "belief" is understood in the same way, as in the phrase where Allah says: ". . . The freeing of a believing slave . . ." (4:92), then what is meant by the term "believer" is someone who has shown himself outwardly to be a Muslim. For the belief upon which worldly judgments are based is an outward belief that may be identified with Islam. Hence, in terms of outward judgments on individuals, the words "belief" and Islam, or "believer" and Muslim, refer to the same thing. For this reason, when al-Athram mentioned to Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] that the Murjiʾites' argument was based on the words of the Prophet (pbuh): "Free her, for she is a believer," Aḥmad replied that this statement is based on the woman's being reckoned a believer according to outward, worldly standards; it does not, however, mean that if this woman met Allah [in the afterlife], with nothing but an outward testimony of belief, she would be a believer in Allah's eyes meriting Paradise without having first to enter Hellfire [to purify her of her sins]. This type of believer is the "absolute" believer according to the Book of Allah, that is, the one who has perfect belief and is therefore promised Paradise without ever having to go through the fires of Hell. Therefore, Ibn Masʿūd and others of the pious ancestors used to require anyone who claimed to have belief to also claim that he would enter Paradise (i.e., to claim that he would die a believer). For it was firmly agreed on that Paradise is only for those who die with their belief intact.

If a person said: "I am, absolutely, a believer, and I am a believer in the judgment of Allah," he would be asked to ascertain that he would enter Paradise without punishment if he died in this state; for Allah says that believers would enter Paradise without punishment. Indeed, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal denied the ḥadith of Ibn ʿUmayrah that stated that ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd changed his mind about the matter of saying "if Allah wills" after stating that one is a believer. This is due to

the fact that when Ibn Masʿūd was told that a community said: "We are believers," he asked: "Did you not ask them if they would be in Paradise?" In another account, Ibn Masʿūd asked: "Did they not say that they were the people of Paradise?" In a third account, he was told that a man claimed to be a believer, to which Ibn Masʿūd replied: "Ask him: Will he be in Paradise or in Hell?" When they asked the man, his answer was: "Allah knows best." To this Ibn Masʿūd replied: "Why did he not say the same thing ["Allah knows best"] when he was asked about Iman?" Indeed, it is recorded by Qatādah, Naʿīm Ibn Abī Hind,[30] and others on the authority of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb that he [the latter] said: "Whoever says 'I am a believer' is an unbeliever, whoever says 'I am a scholar' is ignorant, and whoever says 'I will be in Paradise' will be in Hell."

The Murjiʾites posed this question to Ibn Masʿūd, saying that Yazīd Ibn ʿUmayrah had posed it to Ibn Masʿūd also, until he changed his mind about the question of whether to say "if Allah wills" after claiming to be a believer. But if one knows that he is a believer today, he does not know that he will remain so when he dies. That is why some people started saying that a believer is he whom Allah knew in advance would have his belief sealed for him; the unbeliever is the one whom Allah knew in advance would be an unbeliever. Moreover, no consideration is given to what the person was before this time. It is on this basis that they insisted on the necessity of saying "if Allah wills" after claiming to be a believer. Indeed, this is what some of the companions of Aḥmad and others said, and it was also the view of Abu al-Ḥassan [al-Asharī] and his companions.

However, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others among the pious ancestors did not mean this. Rather, they meant that absolute Iman includes the performance of what is commanded. Accordingly, saying, "I am a believer" is like his saying, "I am Allah's friend; I am a believer who fears Allah and believes in Him; I am one of the pious ones" and so on. And as it is a well-known fact that Ibn Masʿūd knew well that Paradise is only for the person who dies as a believer and that a man does not know in which state [whether belief or disbelief] he will die. However, his saying, "Ask him, will he be in Paradise if he dies in his state [of belief]?' is similar to saying, "Ask him, will he be one of the people of Paradise in this state?" But when the man replied: "Allah and His Messenger know best," Ibn Masʿūd

[30] Naʿīm Ibn Abī Hind (?–110 A.H.) was a trustworthy scholar of ḥadith. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 362.]

remarked: "He should have said the same thing when he was asked about his Iman." This means that one should not testify of himself that he performs the obligations and that he abandons what is prohibited. For if he does so, then he testifies of himself that he will be one of the people of Paradise if he dies in this state. That is why those who do not believe in saying, "if Allah wills" concerning one's present state, but only concerning one's state when he dies, do not judge for certain that Allah does not accept the repentance of a repentant for he may go back on his repentance before death. They also did not judge for certain that Allah punishes a sinner. For if they claimed to know for certain that his repentance was accepted, this would require that they guarantee his entry into Paradise. However, they do not state absolutely whether any Muslim will go to Paradise or Hell unless this is stated clearly of him in the texts [of Qur'ān and the Sunnah].

If it is said that Paradise is for whoever faithfully repents of all bad deeds, and they said that even if he died in this state of repentance, we cannot judge for certain that he would enter Paradise. They did not make exceptions in certain cases. Rather, they judged that a believer is he who has complete Iman. Accordingly, they guaranteed Paradise for the person whom they judged to have died as a believer, with no sins. That is why they did not judge the acceptability of his repentance, in order not to be forced to judge him worthy to enter Paradise. The leaders of the pious ancestors did not make any unequivocal judgments about who enters Paradise, for they could not judge for certain that a man performed what he was commanded to do and abandoned what was prohibited. Nor did they judge for certain that he was true and faithful in his repentance.

The leading pious ancestors unanimously agreed on the fact that a single name is negated or affirmed according to judgments that are related to it. Hence, if a name is affirmed or negated in one judgment, it does not mean it would be so in all the rest. This is true of the speech of the Arabs as well as of other communities. An illustrative example is the hypocrites who were included among the believers in one place, while they were excluded from them in another. Allah says: "Indeed Allah knows those among you who keep back [men] and those who say to their brother: come along to us, but come not to the fight except for just a little while. [They are] covetous over you. Then when fear comes, you will see them looking to you, their eyes revolving, like [those of] one over whom hovers death; but when the fear is past, they will smite you with sharp tongues in their greed for wealth [from the spoils]. Such men have no belief, and so Allah makes their deeds of no

effect: and that is easy for Allah" (33:18–19). In this verse, hypocrites are described as those who fear the enemy, are reluctant to undertake jihād, forbid others from jihād, and dispraise believers. In another verse, Allah says: "They swear by Allah that they are indeed of you; but they are not of you: yet they are afraid [to appear in their true colors]. If they could find a place to flee to, or caves, or a place of concealment, they would turn away threats with an obstinate rush" (9:56–57). The sins of these hypocrites are less serious than those of the hypocrites mentioned in the previous verses. For they did not harm the believers, either by forbidding them from jihād or by smiting them with sharp tongues. However, they swore by Allah that they were believers in their hearts, although they were not. That is why Allah says, in the last verse, that "they are not of you." He also says, in the previous verse, that "indeed Allah knows those among you who keep back [men]." This statement refers to whoever is outwardly a believing Muslim, saying that some of them have these characteristics. However, such people are not believers, for Allah make their deeds worthless. Hence, such people were "of you" outwardly, but not inwardly.

Indeed, when the Prophet (pbuh) was questioned about fighting against hypocrites, he said: "He did not want people to say that Muḥammad fights against his friends." Accordingly these hypocrites were, outwardly speaking, considered friends of the Prophet. Indeed, this is what was believed by those who did not know the truth about them. However, the true friends of the Prophet (pbuh) did not have the least hypocrisy. For they [the true friends] were the ones who taught others about the sayings of the Prophet, who fought against the apostates, who became unbelievers after the death of the Prophet, and the ones who pledged allegiance to the Prophet (pbuh) under the tree, including the people of Badr and others. However, these people, who were hypocrites, were mostly people who were not versed in worldly affairs.

Similarly, we have lines of descent, as when a man is someone's father or brother, in which some rules apply to him while others do not. For we read in *al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* that Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and ʿAbd Ibn Zamʿah Ibn al-Aswad brought a dispute before the Prophet (pbuh) concerning the son of Walīdah Zamʿah. For ʿUtbah Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ had sexual relations with her out of wedlock before the time of the Prophet, after which she gave birth to a son. ʿUtbah then said to his brother Saʿd: "When you come to Makkah, look at Walīdah Zamʿah's son, and you will see that I am his father." It was after this that he and ʿAbd Ibn Zamʿah [i.e., Zamʿah's son]

brought their dispute over him to the Prophet (pbuh). Saᶜd said: "Oh, Messenger of Allah! My brother ᶜUtbah charged me, when I came to Makkah, to look at Walīdah Zamᶜah's son, claiming that he was the boy's father. So, Oh, Messenger of Allah, do you not see his resemblance to ᶜUtbah?" Then ᶜAbd Ibn Zamᶜah said: "Oh, Messenger of Allah, [he is] my brother and Walīdah's son [who] was born on my father's bed." And seeing the clear resemblance between the boy and ᶜUtbah, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "He is your [relative], Oh, ᶜAbd Ibn Zamᶜah. The boy was indeed born on this man's bed, and let the whore be stoned." [Then, speaking to Sawdah, ᶜAbd Ibn Zamᶜah's sister, he said]: "And veil yourself so as not to be seen by him, Sawdah!" He said this because of the boy's clear resemblance to ᶜUtbah [Sawdah's father]. For the Prophet (pbuh) judged him to be Zamᶜah's son since he was born on his bed. And he declared him to be a brother to Zamᶜah's son, saying: "He is your [relative], ᶜAbd Ibn Zamᶜah." Sawdah thus became his sister and a joint heir with him, since he was the son of her father Zamᶜah, born on his bed. Then the Prophet (pbuh) commanded her to veil herself in his presence due to the clear resemblance he bore to ᶜUtbah.[31] For there were two different sorts of evidence relating to him: the bed on which he was born, and the resemblance between him and ᶜUtbah. The first of these was the most compelling. However, their resemblance was a public matter, whereas sexual sin is a secret, illicit matter of which no one was to know, and which must be hidden rather than revealed. As he [the Prophet] said: "Let the whore be stoned." Similarly one might say: "in your mouth is dust," and "in your mouth is gravel"; that is, "you must not speak openly of sexual immorality, for it is something that Allah abhors." And since it was possible for her to veil herself in his presence without any harm being done, he commanded her to do so due to the evidence that in his heart, he was not her true brother.

It thus becomes apparent that the same classification may be affirmed in one judgment and negated in another. For he is considered a true brother to her with respect to inheritance, but is nevertheless not considered to be a close enough relation that he would be precluded from marrying her. On the other hand, an illegitimate son, in the view of some scholars of Islam, and likewise Ibn

[31] It appears that the Prophet wanted to conceal the scandal of their being born of the same father by having the girl Sawdah veil herself in the boy's presence as if he were not her brother. For, under normal circumstances, there is no need for a girl to veil herself in the presence of male relatives for whom she would not be a potential wife.

malāʿinah, *a son of perdition,* in the view of all except for those who depart from the consensus, is not classified as a true son when it comes to inheritance; however, he is considered to be a true son with respect to being forbidden to marry certain females in the family.

The term nikāḥ, *marriage,* comprises marriage in the complete sense, including a contractual agreement and consummation, as when Allah says: "... Then marry women of your choice ..." (4:3); and "So if a husband divorces his wife, he cannot, after that, remarry her until after she has married another husband and he has divorced her. In that case there is no blame on either of them if they reunite, provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah ..." (2:230). In prohibitions, on the other hand, we find marriage referred to in both the complete and the partial senses, such that in some cases only the contractual agreement is forbidden without the inclusion of sexual relations, as when Allah says: "And marry not women whom your fathers married ..." (4:22). This is because the intention of the one giving the command is to achieve some benefit which would only come about through consummation of a marriage. It is as if one were to say, "buy me some food," where the intention can only be carried out by making the purchase and collecting the goods. As for the person forbidding some action, he intends to prevent some sort of damage or corruption; for this reason he includes every aspect of what is being forbidden, since its very existence is a cause of corruption. The same applies to matters pertaining to lineage and inheritance, which require marriage in the full sense. However, marriage to a male relative may be precluded based on even the most minor cause, including having nursed from the same woman.

Similarly, anything that has an early stage and a stage of perfection is sometimes negated when its perfection is negated; whereas it is sometimes affirmed when its early stage is affirmed. For example, the term "men" includes all males, even if they are young. Allah says: "... If they are brothers and sisters, the male having twice the share of the female ..." (4:176). However, the term "men" does not include male children in the following saying of Allah: "... And of those who, being weak, are ill-treated [and oppressed] men and women, and male children whose cry is: 'Our Lord! rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors ...'" (4:75). This is due to the fact that hijrah, *immigration in the cause of Allah,* and jihād are deeds that only the capable can perform. Hence, if the verse were restricted only to men who were weak and ill-treated, then male children would

be excluded, although they also are weak and ill-treated. Therefore, mentioning male children [by name] was intended to make clear that they were excused for not being able to immigrate and to fight for the sake of Allah. Iman has an early stage and a stage of perfection. It also has an outward aspect and an inward aspect. Accordingly, worldly judgments concerning rights and limitations—such as saving lives, property, and inheritance, as well as worldly punishments—must be based solely on the outward aspect of Iman, not the inward aspect. For it is very difficult, if not impossible, to base them on inward Iman, due to the fact that inward Iman is unknown and uncertain to us. Hence, one cannot punish a hypocrite, even if he thinks that he has no inward Iman.

Indeed, the Prophet (pbuh) used to refrain from punishing hypocrites, for there were some people who did not know that they were hypocrites, as Allah states. And even if he [the Prophet] knew who the hypocrites were, he would not punish them; for his people would have become angry and say, "Muḥammad kills his Companions," which may have alienated some from Islam. This was the case unless hypocrites committed outward, publicly recognized sins. And when the Prophet (pbuh) tried to punish those who did not go to the mosque for congregational prayer, he could not. He was prevented from doing so by the presence of women and children at home, since he had intended to punish each and every person who did not attend the prayers. Commands and prohibitions are related to the early stage of Iman. Therefore, when Allah says: "Oh, you who believe! When you prepare for prayer . . ." (5:6) and similar sayings, He refers to an outward act for all people who are, outwardly, Muslims. It is also an inward address for all people who know about themselves that they believe in the Messenger and put their trust in him, even if they are disobedient and fail to perform the outward and inward obligations. For if the phrase "those who believe" is applicable to them, then there is no dispute; and if it is not, then it is because of their sins. However, their sins would not prevent them from doing good deeds, which, if they actually do them, will be the cause of Allah's mercy on them. However, if they do not perform good deeds, their punishment is due to their having abandoned Iman. Even the disbeliever is required to obey what is commanded. However, if he does so, these good deeds will not be accepted of him, for Iman is a condition for the acceptance of good deeds. Likewise in the case of the sheer hypocrite, his good deeds will not be acceptable unless he has inner Iman.

If someone has the root of Iman, which is the inner acceptance of Islam [that is, he is in the early stage of Iman], his deeds will be accepted, for he inwardly accepted the necessity of what the Messenger ordered and abandoned what the Messenger prohibited. Related to the perfection of Iman is the promise of Paradise, victory, and safety from Hell. Indeed, this promise concerns him who has performed what he was commanded to do and abandoned what was prohibited. However, he who performs some and neglects some [of the obligatory acts] will be rewarded for what he has done and will be punished for what he has neglected. Such a man will not be classified as "a believer who deserves praise without punishment." It follows that whenever the Messenger negates someone's Iman, the negation is made by way of a warning or threat that requires a negation of that which merits reward or wards off punishment. Accordingly, the negation of Iman of the people who commit sins, as reported in the Book and the Sunnah, is related to threat and dispraise, but it is related neither to commands and prohibitions nor to worldly judgments.

The names Islam, Iman, and Iḥsān are all praiseworthy and desirable names for people who are characterized by them will be safe in the Hereafter. The Prophet (pbuh) made clear that he who has been characterized by Islam, Iman, and Iḥsān in the manner that he [the Prophet] indicated will receive an excellent reward. Accordingly, whenever the Prophet (pbuh) negated someone's Iman or both his Iman and his Islam but did not consider him an unbeliever, he negated these only with respect to reward in the Hereafter, but not with regard to worldly judgments. However, the Muʿtazilites believed that if the name Iman or Islam is negated of someone, then its parts would be negated accordingly. Hence, the Muʿtazilites thought that whenever the Prophet (pbuh) negated anyone's Iman, or both Iman and Islam [as stated earlier], then he has neither Iman nor Islam and such a man should abide in Hell. However, this interpretation contradicts what is in the Book and the Sunnah as well as the consensus of the pious ancestors. For if someone has neither Iman or Islam, then none of the believers' and Muslims' rules could be applicable to him; rather, he is considered to be a hypocrite. The Book, the Sunnah, and the consensus [of the Muslim jurists] all agreed on the distinction between someone who does not inwardly believe in what the Prophet (pbuh) said, and the believer who commits a sin. Indeed, the Muʿtazilites did not distinguish between sinners and hypocrites in terms of the judgments of this world or the Hereafter. This equity is demonstrated in the negation of a man's Islam and Iman.

It may be affirmed of the hypocrite that outwardly, he is both a Muslim and a believer while, on the other hand, they may deny that the sinner is a Muslim or a believer, whether outwardly or inwardly.

Someone might ask, if each and every believer is a Muslim, yet not every Muslim is a believer [with perfect Iman]—as indicated in the ḥadith of Gabriel, other ḥadiths, and the Qur'ān, and the sayings of the pious ancestors [for Islam is outward obedience as well as submission, while Iman also connotes the meaning of acceptance and tranquility, which is more than mere submission]—then what do you say about the person who performs what Allah orders, and forbids what Allah prohibits, and is loyal and faithful to Allah in his outward deeds and inner intent? Is not such a man considered a Muslim, outwardly as well as inwardly, and will he not enter Paradise? If so, and if only believers enter Paradise, then he is a believer.

We say that elsewhere in this book we have mentioned that such a man must have the required Iman; for if he did not perform the requirements, he would be exposed to the threat of punishment. However, there may be Iman that is not required of him; either he has not been presented with it or he is incapable of performing it. For the Iman and Islam described in the ḥadith of Gabriel were not considered requirements in the early stages of Islam. Nor were they considered requirements of previous communities who followed the Prophets [the people of Paradise], although they were believing Muslims, and although Islam is the religion of Allah and the only religion that is accepted. Islam is also the religion of Allah, both in the present life and in the Hereafter. For Islam is the worship of Allah only, with no partners, and obedience to Him. Allah's commands may vary in a single Sharī'ah, *Islamic law,* not to mention in more than one such law. Accordingly, Islam may include some requirements of Iman that may be excluded in another time. An illustrative example is the prayer toward the Rock [namely, when Muslims used to pray toward Jerusalem in the early period of Islam, before the Qiblah was transferred to Makkah]. This kind of prayer was part of Islam, when Allah orders it to be so, but was no longer part of Islam after He prohibits it.

It is a well-known fact that the five pillars of Islam, which are mentioned in the ḥadith of Gabriel, were not made obligatory in the early stages of Islam. Instead fasting, pilgrimage, and giving zakah were made obligations in Madīnah. Also, the

five prayers were made obligatory on the night of [the Prophet's] ascension. Moreover, many of the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) make no mention of pilgrimage. For pilgrimage was only made obligatory later, in the year 9 or 10 A.H. When Allah reveals His mission to Muḥammad (pbuh), whoever followed him [the Prophet] and believed what was revealed in his message was considered a believer and a Muslim. And if such a person died, he would be among those meriting Paradise. After this stage, Allah adds to and completes Iman and Islam. Allah says: "... This day I perfected your religion for you ..." (5:3). The same is applicable to Iman. For indeed, the detailed Iman mentioned in the ḥadith of Gabriel was not made obligatory in the early stages of Islam, when Allah revealed the Sūrahs entitled al-ʿAlaq, *The Clot of Congealed Blood,* and Muddaththir, *One Who Is Wrapped Up*. Rather, it was made obligatory in the Madīnan Sūrahs, such as Sūrah Baqarah, *The Cow,* and Sūrah al-Nisāʾ· *The Women*. Hence, detailed Iman was not made obligatory for people who died before that time. Moreover, a man could be a Muslim who worships Allah only, and does not associate partners with Him, who had the obligatory Iman [Iman that was made obligatory for him] and who would be of the people of Paradise, yet without having detailed Iman, which was mentioned in the ḥadith of Gabriel. Such a man [who was a Muslim at the early stage of Islam] is said to have the Iman and Islam that was made obligatory for him. Hence, he could be a Muslim who worships Allah [as commanded] and who does not worship anyone other than Allah, Whom he fears and from whom he seeks forgiveness; but he may not love Allah and His Messenger more than all other things and people, nor love Allah, His Messenger, and jihād more than his family and his money. Also, he may not desire for his brother what he desires for himself, nor fear and take refuge in Allah alone. But it is these things that, altogether, constitute obligatory Iman. For Islam is the submission that implies obedience to none but Allah, and following and adoring none but Allah. Submission and adoration may include fear [of Allah] and hope in Him. However, tranquility of the heart due to loving none but Allah, love of Allah and His Messenger that is greater than one's love of anything else, trust in Allah, and desiring for a brother in Islam what one desires for oneself: all these are realities that correspond to Iman, and whoever does not demonstrate them in his life is not considered to be a true believer, even if he is a Muslim. The same is applicable to other phenomenon, such as having a tremor in one's heart when Allah's name is mentioned and increasing one's Iman when Allah's verses are recited.

Someone might ask: Is the absence of this Iman considered a sin or not? The answer would be: If a man has not been presented with it, then its absence is not to be considered a sin, even if he is able to attain it. Many people, or even the majority of people [which is true of the masses at all times and places], do not have knowledge about the details included in Iman, although they perform the required obedience of Islam. When they commit a sin, they repent and ask for Allah's forgiveness, but they do not know either about the requirements of Iman or about the fact that they are parts of Iman. Indeed, many of the people who know about these requirements, if they even believe in their existence, think that they are supererogatory acts of piety, which are desirable but not required.

Islam includes whoever declares his Islam yet does not have any Iman. Such a man is a sheer hypocrite [namely, a hypocrite with regard to belief, who pretends that he is a Muslim, although he is an unbeliever in his heart]. Islam also includes whoever declares his Islam and has inner belief in Islam as a whole, but does not perform all the requirements or obligations. Such a man is considered a sinner who has a "branch" of hypocrisy. Islam also includes whoever performs the required Islam and the Iman that it requires, but fails to attain perfect Iman. Such a man is not considered a sinner who has neglected an obligation or committed a forbidden act; rather, he is dispraised for neglecting some aspects of Iman that are required to be known and fulfilled outwardly and inwardly [in the heart]. Indeed, this is the kind of hypocrisy the pious ancestors used to fear; for whoever has it, has some degree of hypocrisy in his heart. Beyond this there are aspects of belief by which Allah grants those who draw near to Him distinction over other righteous believers. This may include desirable acts, as well as a degree of Iman or Islam that is required of some but not others. That is why the Prophet said: "Whoever of you sees a wrong deed should change it by his hand; if he is unable to do so, then he should change it with his tongue, and if he is unable to do this, then he should change it with his heart, which is considered the weakest form of Iman." In another ḥadith the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Beyond this [the mere ability to change a wrong deed with one's heart] there is no Iman, even the weight of a mustard seed." By the latter ḥadith, the Prophet (pbuh) meant that disapproving of something in one's heart is the best possible expression of Iman. Hence, the saying does not mean that whoever does not disapprove it [in his heart] does not have even a mustard seed of Iman. Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) divided believers into three

ranks, each of which fulfills the required Iman. Believers in the highest rank [who change the wrong deed with their hands], since they are most able, are required to have a more perfect Iman than those in the second rank, who in turn are asked to have a more perfect Iman than those in the lowest rank. Accordingly, it is clear that people differ in the Iman required of them according to their abilities, provided that all of them have been presented with Iman and its necessity.

Chapter Twenty-Three

Exception In Iman

The question of whether to say, "I am a believer, if Allah wills,"[1] is indeed a controversial issue, and [Muslim] people have three opinions regarding this: some people consider it obligatory; some consider it forbidden; and some accept the two previously stated opinions under different circumstances, and this is the most correct opinion. Those who use the conditional clause, in shā'a Allah, and forbid making the exception are the Murji'ites, Jahmites, and others who considered Iman as a single entity that one recognizes by himself, such as taṣdīq, *assent,* in the Lord and similar matters in one's heart. Therefore, if I say that I know that I am a believer in the same way I know that I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger, and in the same way I know that I have read the Fātiḥah [the first chapter of the Qur'ān] and just as I know that I love the Messenger of Allah and hate the Jews and the Christians, then my saying that I am a believer is like my saying that I am a Muslim, that I have uttered the Shahādah, *testimony,* or read the Fātiḥah, or that I hate the Jews and the Christians, and other such matters that I know for certain. And although it is unacceptable to say: "I read the Fātiḥah, if Allah wills," likewise I cannot say: "I am a believer, if Allah wills." Nevertheless, if one has some doubts about whether he is a believer, then he should add the phrase, "if Allah wills," to his statement. Therefore, whoever makes the exception regarding his Iman is one who has doubts about his Iman, and people of this type are called al-Shakkākah, *the Doubters.*

Those who make the exception a necessity base their claim on two principles. The first is that one's Iman concerns only the state of his Iman when he dies. For a man

[1] The clause anā mu'min, in shā'a Allah, *I am a believer, if Allah wills,* is a theological issue and came to be known as istithnā', *exception in Iman.* Some religious scholars add the conditional clause in shā'a Allah to the affirmative statement "I am a believer," and some do not.

is considered a believer or an unbeliever according to his state of faith or unbelief upon dying, whereas his state before that is of no importance. They say that if Iman is followed by unbelief, then the person who dies in a state of unbelief is considered an unbeliever. This is like someone who spoils his prayer before he finishes it or breaks his fast before sunset. Such a man is indeed considered an unbeliever because of Allah's knowledge of the state in which he will die. This was the argument employed by many later thinkers of the Kullābite sect, as well as others who supported the view that came to be widely ascribed to Orthodox Muslims and people of the ḥadith. According to this view, one must add the clause, "if Allah wills," whenever stating that one is a believer. At the same time, there is no variation or gradation in belief from one person to the next, and this clause is used not because one doubts his present faith, but rather because he is not certain whether he will continue to believe in the future. A further claim was added to these views, namely that the love of Allah, His approval, disapproval, and His wrath exists throughout all eternity. But here the question arises as to whether such things are to be identified with the [divine] will, or with other [divine] attributes? Two positions have been taken on this question. Most earlier thinkers held that divine approval, disapproval, wrath, and so on are attributes not to be identified with divine will. Similarly, hearing and sight are not to be identified with knowledge, nor are friendship and enmity, all of which are eternally preexisting attributes in the view of Abu Muḥammad ʿAbd Allah Ibn Saʿīd Ibn Kullāb and those scholastic theologians who followed in his footsteps, as well as followers of the views of the Ḥanbalites, Shafiʿites, Mālikites, and others.

Such people hold that throughout all eternity Allah loves someone who is an unbeliever, if it becomes known that this person will eventually die a believer. Allah loves the Companions of the Prophet, for example, even though they worshiped idols for a period of time; conversely, Allah abhors Iblīs throughout all eternity, even from the time before he became an unbeliever. This position arises out of one of the two views taken on the question above. For Allah's pleasure and displeasure can be traced back to His will, which in turn corresponds to divine knowledge. What this means is that Allah continues to desire to reward such people after they have embraced belief, and to punish Iblīs after his having become an unbeliever. And this is correct. For Allah wills to create everything that He already knows He will create. And based on the views of those who affirm this, there are other attributes. It has also been said that His love pursues the one whom

He wills to reward, for everyone whom He wills to establish, He loves, and everyone whom He wills to punish, He abhors. And this follows upon knowledge. According to those who hold this view, once someone has been the object of Allah's wrath, he will never enjoy His favor; nor does Allah begin to rejoice in a servant's repentance after He restores him to grace, since He rejoices in it throughout all eternity. His [Allah's] rejoicing arises either out of [His] will or out of [His] approval. And what this means is that Allah always wills to establish such a person [in belief]. Similarly, Allah's wrath against someone does not begin on the Day of Resurrection without any continuity with what went before. Rather, His wrath exists for all eternity, either in the sense of willing it, or in some other sense.

Hence, they claim that if Allah knows that a particular person will die an unbeliever, then He wills this person's punishment for all eternity. Hence, whatever faith this person had is devoid of all benefit; in fact, it may as well not exist. For such a person was not [truly] a believer to begin with. Conversely, if it becomes known that someone will die a believer, then He [Allah] wills to establish this person [in belief] for all eternity, and whatever unbelief he has been guilty of may as well not exist, since according to this view, such a person was never [truly] an unbeliever to begin with. Thus, such people include the phrase, "if Allah wills," whenever stating that anyone is a believer. In fact some of them, for example, Abu Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, add this clause even when stating that someone is an unbeliever. Hence, they apply the same practice in either case. However, the majority of the leading authorities on Islam do not add the exception when stating that someone is an unbeliever. In fact, this practice is a heretical one that has never been reported by any of the pious ancestors. Nevertheless, it is considered to be a necessity [by those who practice it].

There are also some within this group who make a distinction between the two situations, saying that we make the exception with respect to belief out of our desire that Allah may establish us in belief until the day we die, whereas unbelief is something no one would desire. However, if one's stating that he is a believer is tantamount to his saying that he will enter Paradise, then one might say of the unbeliever that he is an unbeliever but not that he will enter Hellfire, unless one meant to say that such a person was going to die an unbeliever. Hence, one might state unequivocally that someone was in a condition of unbelief, albeit with the acknowledgment that he might become a believer. Likewise in the case of the believer, whether he is speaking of himself or of someone else, if he were to say

of a Jew or a Christian, "he is an unbeliever," then he would need to add, "if Allah wills," as long he did not know whether this person would die an unbeliever. And in the view under discussion, no one knows whether anyone else is a believer unless he also knows that he will die in a state of unbelief. This view has been espoused by many scholastic theologians who were disciples of Ibn Kullāb; moreover, it has also found support among a good number of the followers of the founders of the four Orthodox schools of Islam [Abu Ḥanīfah, al-Shāfiʿī, Mālik Ibn Anas, and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal]. Nevertheless, it is not a position that was ever adopted by any of the pious ancestors, the four authorities mentioned above, or anyone else. Nor did any of the pious ancestors who made the exception [with regard to belief] argue for it, including Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and his predecessors.

Excessive Use of Exception

The principle upon which this practice was based was repudiated by a group of leading Muslim thinkers who had been accustomed to making the exception with respect to belief in imitation of the pious ancestors. Thinkers from Syria were particularly hard on the Murjiʾites. This happened during the time when [the city of] ʿAsqalān was [still] inhabited, being one of the choicest of all Muslim seaports. Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf al-Faryānī,[2] a disciple of al-Thawrī, was stationed there. And for this reason it had a frontier fortress built for the sake of Allah. At that time, people used to make the exception when speaking of someone as a believer, thereby following the example of the pious ancestors. They also made the exception whenever someone spoke of righteous works [he intended to perform]. This may be seen in the example of someone who says, "I have prayed, if Allah wills," meaning that if Allah wills, his prayer will be accepted. In this practice situation one may also see the influence of the pious ancestors. After that some took the practice a step further, and began making the exception with respect to everything. One might say, for example, that this is my robe, if Allah wills, or that this is a rope, if Allah wills. And if someone objected, saying that these are matters about which there is not any doubt, he would reply that it is true, there is no doubt about it. However, if Allah wishes to change these things, He could do so. Hence, by using the clause, "if Allah wills," they are expressing the possibility that

[2] Al-Faryānī, Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf (?–212 A.H.), was a close associate of al-Thawrī and was against the Murjiʾites. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 372.]

something might change in the future, even if at the present time it is in a condition concerning which there was no doubt. Thus, the only facts one would not be required to add the clause, "if Allah wills," are those not subject to change. This is similar to the view of those who make the exception with respect to belief, namely, that [true] belief is that which Allah knows will not change, being the same condition in which its possessor will ultimately die.

This position has been taken by learned, pious thinkers with discernment and competence in the formulation of independent judgments on theological questions. And those who make the exception with regard to virtually everything have adopted this practice from some of their mentor's followers. As for their mentor, a man by the name of Abu ʿAmr ʿUthmān Ibn Marzūq,[3] he himself did not support this practice; rather, he followed the tradition of the pious ancestors [i.e., he only practiced making the exception following statements affirming that someone was a believer]. It [the exception] was initiated by some of his later disciples. Abu ʿAmr based his teachings on those of Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], and was also a follower of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Ibn al-Shaykh Abu al-Faraj al-Maqdisī,[4] who was himself a follower of al-Qāḍī Abu Yaʿlā. And although all of those mentioned here traced their views back to those of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, they were nevertheless all in agreement with the basic teachings of Ibn Kullāb, whose supporters were condemned by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. On account of this, he ordered that al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāibī[5] be ostracized. Nevertheless, Ibn Kullāb's views also found support among some of the followers of Mālik Ibn Anas, al-Shāfiʿī, and Abu Ḥanīfah—such as Abu al-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī, Abu al-Walīd al-Bājī, Abu Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, and others. And the views of such individuals on making the exception derived from the positions they took on various issues related to the divine attributes; for example, the question of whether the Qurʾān was something that Allah uttered by His will and power, or something that is inseparably associated with His essence.

[3] Abu ʿAmr ʿUthmān Ibn Marzūq (?–564 A.H.) was a Ḥanbalī jurist and a mystic who used the exception extensively. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 373 and al-Ziriklī, vol. 1, p. 378.]

[4] ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Ibn al-Shaykh Abu al-Faraj al-Maqdisī (?–536 A.H.) was a chief Ḥanbalī jurist of his time, a scholar of ḥadith, and a commentator of the Qurʾān. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 373.]

[5] Al-Muḥāsibī, al-Ḥārith ʿAbd Allah (?–243 A.H.), was a mystic, a theologian, and a follower of the Kullābite sect. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal opposed his position. [*EI*, vol. 7, pp. 466–67 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, pp. 373–74.]

This also formed the basis for the views adopted by al-Ash‘arī and his followers; for they were all supporters of Ibn Kullāb's views, according to which Allah does not speak as an act of will and power. They also hold that Allah does not [begin to] show favor toward someone after he becomes a believer or [begin to] show His wrath toward someone after he has become an unbeliever; nor does He rejoice in the repentance of the repenter after he has repented. Therefore they agreed with the teaching of the pious ancestors, that the Qur'ān is Allah's uncreated speech. They also held that this speech existed throughout all eternity, from which it followed that Allah had not uttered it by an act of will and power. However, there were disagreements among them as to the meaning of the term qadīm, *sempiternal,* that is, eternally preexistent. They debated over whether this term bears only one meaning, or whether it refers to eternally preexisting words and letters, which then appeared in succession. Their views and those of others on this matter have been presented more fully elsewhere.

Another teaching espoused by this later group of thinkers was that one must never say qaṭ‘an, *absolutely* or *certainly,* with regard to anything whatsoever. This was related to their extreme view on the necessity of making the exception with regard to virtually everything. This word became so odious to them, in fact, that even though they made unequivocal statements such as, "Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah," or that Allah is their Lord, they would nevertheless never add a term such as "absolutely" or "certainly" to such affirmations. I once met with a group of them and criticized them for this; in fact, I refused to comply with the request they made of me until they said, "certainly." They brought me a book that contained traditions on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh), according to which he had forbidden anyone to say, "absolutely." However, these are unauthentic traditions that were fabricated by later thinkers [desiring to use them in support of their own teachings].

The point being made here is that making the exception with regard to Iman that someone is a believer (for whatever explanation they may render for justifying that cause,) some people reject this argument with regard to things about which it is not possible to make the exception by unanimous agreement of all Muslims. This view was based on the notion that if Allah knows that the condition will change presently existing things, then the exception is made with respect to characteristics they possess at the present time. Someone might say "this is small, if Allah wills," since Allah might cause it to become large; or one might say "that person is

insane, if Allah wills," since Allah might restore the person's sanity. Likewise someone might say of the apostate "He is an unbeliever, if Allah wills," due to the possibility that he might repent. Those who have made it a practice to make the exception in statements pertaining to someone's being a believer on the basis of this notion believed that this was the same practice adopted by the pious ancestors. Such people, as well as scholastic theologians holding similar views, supported [those truths that have] come to light through Islam. Support for the same view was found among the Muʿtazilites, the Jahmites, and other Muslim theologians; hence, they affirmed belief in the Creator, Prophethood, and the Hereafter. And, along with the followers of Ibn Kullāb, Ibn Karrām, al-Ashʿarī, and others, they supported the doctrines developed by the various theological schools of Orthodox Islam and the Muslim community. Hence, they affirmed their belief that the Qurʾān is the uncreated speech of Allah, that Allah may be seen in the Hereafter, and that the people of the Qiblah do not become unbelievers merely by committing sins, nor do they abide eternally in Hellfire. Moreover, they believed that the Prophet (pbuh) was given the right to intercede on behalf of those who committed major sins, that the trial of the grave is a just reality, as retribution after death is just and the ḥawḍ,[6] *pool,* of our Prophet is just in the Afterlife. There are also other similar teachings that were widely believed to be among the fundamental beliefs of Orthodox Muslims and the community of Muslim scholars. They also believed in the legitimacy of the first four Caliphs, the superior virtue of Abu Bakr and ʿUmar (Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb) and so on.

Indeed, many of the scholastic theologians did not know the facts of Islam, what is in the Sunnah, or the opinions of the pious ancestors regarding many of the views they supported. Therefore, they blindly supported the surface meaning of the opinions of the pious ancestors without being aware of the essence of these opinions. Or they may have supported the opinions of the heretics. Hence, they fell into error, confusion, and disagreement because the pious ancestors condemned such views and those who held them. For such opinions opposed what is in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. And whatever opposes the Qurʾān and the Sunnah is falsehood and lies, standing in contradiction to Islamic law. Allah says: "The Word of Allah is completed in Truth and Justice . . ." (6:115). So when it became widely known among these thinkers that Orthodox Muslims made the exception

[6] The word ḥawḍ refers to a special pool called ḥawḍ al-Rasūl, *the Messenger's pool.* Muḥammad's followers will be allowed to drink from it on the day of Resurrection.

with affirmations pertaining to someone's being a believer, and when they arrived at the belief that this practice must be based on the fact that belief is only that state in which someone dies (that is, the state in which someone meets his Lord), consequently they concluded that this must be how the pious ancestors themselves defined belief, and thus they attributed this view to the pious ancestors. However, the fact is that none of the pious ancestors taught this. Nevertheless, this was the view that was attributed to them due to their supposition that the pious ancestors' practice with regard to making the exception necessitated such a view. They claimed that the Jahmite's view of belief, which they espoused, was the same view that had been espoused by investigators and theoreticians among ḥadith scholars. Such a phenomenon was frequently found among them with respect to the teachings of the pious ancestors, which were opposed by some thinkers, who offered arguments in support of their views without an understanding of what the pious ancestors truly taught. Hence, if someone became acquainted with such people's arguments apart from what the pious ancestors taught, and if it is someone who held them in high esteem due to their distinguished position, with respect to them he might have said that this was the view of the inquirers. As for the inquirers, they held that this was a groundless position that stands in contradiction to both reason and Islamic law. However, this appears frequently among the writings of some heretics and atheists. And one whom Allah has granted knowledge and Iman knows that the truth attained by later Muslims is never as complete as that which was attained by the pious ancestors, whether in regard to knowledge or works. One who has experience with theories and mental reasoning and processes knows that the doctrine of the Companions was always more sound than that of their followers. One also knows that anyone who comes up with his own view on Islam is always making an error, and that the right view is always to be found in the sayings of those who came before him.

The Ash'arites' Opinion on the State of Belief at the Time of One's Death and the Response to It

Abu al-Qāsim al-Anṣārī related, on the authority of Abu Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī, regarding the view of Abu al-Hassan [al-Ash'arī] and his companions on Iman, which was corrected to be taṣdīq, *assent,* in the heart, that he [the latter] said that some of his friends said, concerning, al-muwāfāt, *the state of belief at the time of*

one's death, that a condition of genuine Iman is to end one's life in a state of belief and to meet one's Lord in this state. Others, however, do not regard this as such a condition.

Al-Anṣārī said that when most of the leaders of the pious ancestors used to say that Iman is knowledge in the heart, verbal testimony of the tongue, and works of the parts of the body, the majority of them stressed the importance of the state of belief at the time of one's death [i.e., a person must end his life as a believer by performing what is commanded and avoiding what is prohibited]. These leaders stressed the importance of belief at the time of one's death, for those persons whom Allah does not mention that they will enter Paradise. But if this is mentioned of someone, then he is certainly a believer, just as the Prophet's ten Companions [who were promised Paradise] are [true believers]. He [al-Anṣārī] said that those with a proper understanding of the truth said that Iman is taṣdīq in the heart. He also mentioned their dispute over the state of one's belief at the time of death, whether this state is a condition for judging the soundness and genuineness of Iman, and whether this is crucial in determining Allah's judgment. It follows that those who said that this is a condition for judging Iman made the exception [i.e., they said, "if Allah wills"]. This does not mean that they doubted the genuineness of one's belief in the oneness of Allah or one's knowledge of Him; rather they said that they did not know which Iman we have in the present: is it recognized by Allah? That is, will we benefit from it in the Hereafter and reap its blessings?

If they are asked: "Are you true believers?" or "Do you say, 'if Allah wills,' or 'We hope. . . .'"? in reply they would say: "We are believers, if Allah wills." By making this exception, they meant that this matter was left to Allah's judgment. For Iman is taken into account in Allah's judgment if it is a sign of deliverance and the knowledge of salvation. However, if the possessor of Iman was (Allah forbid) judged by Allah to be among the unfortunate, then his Iman was considered devoid of value. According to them, there was no difference between saying, "I am definitely a believer who will enter Paradise," and saying, "I am a true believer."

However, this only follows from the view of one who defines belief so as to include the performance of religious obligations and the abandonment of those things that are forbidden. Someone who dies in this state will enter Paradise. As

for those who supported the views of the Jahmites and the Murji'ites, they believed that such a person will undoubtedly die a believer with perfect belief. However, he may also be a major sinner bound to enter Hellfire. Hence it follows that simply because he dies a believer, this does not mean that he will enter Paradise. And it is this logical reasoning of their view that indicates its falsity, for Allah promises believers that they will enter Paradise. Allah says: "Allah has promised the believers, men and women, Gardens . . ." (9:72). Hence, those who affirmed so unequivocally that such a person will die a believer considered his steadfastness in belief to be a result of this assent, as well as the belief that we have described to punishment and fulfillment of it in the Afterlife as a condition of belief on the basis of law, not on the basis of language or reason. It has been said that this was the teaching of the earliest ḥadith scholars. It was also the view chosen by Abu Bakr Ibn Fūrak. As for Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq Ibn Khuzaymah, he took it to extremes, claiming that anyone who says he is a true believer is a heretic.

Regarding the doctrine of the pious ancestors and experts on ḥadith—such as Ibn Masʿūd and his followers, al-Thawrī, Ibn ʿUyyaynah, and the majority of the scholars of Kūfah—Yaḥyā Ibn Saʿid al-Qaṭṭān, on the authority of the scholars of Baṣrah, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, and other leading Orthodox Muslims all of them used to make the exception with regard to Iman. This has been reported about them by numerous widespread sources. However, none of them said that he made the exception due to uncertainty about the state of his belief at the time of his death. Nor did they say that Iman is merely the state of one's belief at the time of death. Rather, their leaders declared that the exception was made because Iman includes the performance of one's religious obligations. For this is something about which they could not bear witness for themselves, just as they could not testify for themselves that they were pious and righteous. These are things they simply did not know about themselves [as will be indicated later].

As for the importance al-muwāfāt, *the state of belief at the time of one's death,* I know of none of the pious ancestors who justified the practice of making the exception on this basis. However, many later thinkers, including ḥadith scholars and followers of Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], Mālik, al-Shāfiʿī, as well as speculative thinkers such as Abu al-Ḥassan al-Ashʿarī and most of his disciples, used it as a justification. However, this is not the position taken by the earliest ḥadith scholars.

Someone might ask: "if you say that the belief we are commanded to have in Islamic law is what you have described with certain conditions attached, though it is not a sense that has been passed down through linguistic usage, then how can you legitimately say that the term 'belief' is consistent with such usage?" In response we would say that belief is the same as assent; both are based on linguistic usage and Islamic law. However, Islamic law added to this assent certain conditions and specifications, the sum total of which becomes acceptable and a basis for reward, as we have likewise mentioned with regard to prayer, fasting, making the pilgrimage, and so on. The same is true for the linguistic meaning of "prayer, it is supplication," except that the Islamic law added certain conditions to it.

It might then be said that this contradicts what some have said the term "belief" refers to; for when they claim that, linguistically speaking, this term means the same as taṣdīq, *assent,* and that Islamic law introduced no changes into it, they have answered themselves.

Someone might ask: Do not the terms "prayer," "pilgrimage," and zakah have meanings different from those they originally conveyed in the language? And are they not used in a manner that differs from the way speakers of the language used them before? To this we would reply that scholars have differed on this question. But the fact is that their meanings have been determined by the manner in which speakers of the language have used them before. Moreover, they have retained their required components, and have not been shifted away from their original sense, though some elements have been added to them. And if we granted, for the sake of argument, that they had indeed been shifted away from their original meanings, or that they had clearly been used in a metaphorical manner, then on this basis one might adduce evidence that something similar had occurred with regard to the term "belief." For it is not necessary that all phenomena in the Qur'ān be removed simply because one of its phenomena has been removed.

The author of this book refutes his [Abu al-Qāsim al-Anṣārī's] view by saying that he claimed that the addition of the exception is based on Islamic law. He thus considered the exception to be like prayer and zakah, although there is no evidence [in Islamic law] to support the notion that Iman is judged solely according to one's belief at the time of death. Also, it is known that the evidence for the inclusion of

works in Iman is much more simple and more widely recognized. So, why are works not included in Iman, according to Islamic law? Moreover, he [al-Anṣārī] claimed that the statement, "there must be definitive evidence [that someone will enter Paradise]," can be refuted in two ways. One way is to refute the notion that one's Iman is judged according to the state of his belief at the time of his death. The second is to affirm that we have greater certainty that one's love for Allah and His Messenger and other such attitudes are included in the word Iman [as it is used in the words of Allah and His Messenger] than we have concerning some acts of prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage over which people dispute. Moreover, Abu al-Ḥassan, Ibn Furak, and others who stressed the importance of one's state of belief at the time of death do not make the exception. Rather, they believed that if Islamic law negates someone's Iman, he will lose the taṣdīq in his heart. He [al-Anṣārī] said that among his friends are those who did not make one's state of belief at the time of death a condition for genuine Iman at the present time, although they did consider this a condition for being rewarded for one's Iman. Indeed, this was the doctrine of the Muʿtazilite's and the Karrāmites. It was also the opinion of Abu Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī, which was supported by statements made by al-Qāḍī. He [al-Anṣārī] said that it is also the opinion of our teacher Abu al-Maʿālī, who said that Iman in al-ḥāl, *the present,* is definitely established and not subject to doubt. However, the Iman that is the knowledge of being rewarded [in Paradise] and the sign of deliverance [from Hell] is the Iman that one has at the time of death. The latter type of Iman was the concern of the pious ancestors, who associated it with the use of the clause, "if Allah wills." Yet they did so without doubting the possibility of having a complete, perfect Iman. He [Abu al-Maʿālī] added that Iman is a kind of description or adjective from which the word "believer" is derived and which refers to knowledge and taṣdīq. Similarly, the word ʿālim, *scientist,* is derived from the word ʿilm, *science.* And if I recognize Iman in myself, I can be certain of it, just as I can be certain that I am a scientist, or that I know or believe something. If something occurs in the future to remove it [Iman], then one no longer deserves to be described as a believer. In such a case, we are not to say that it is now clear to us that this person did not truly have the Iman that Allah commands. Rather, it was an Iman worthy of reward that has now undergone changes and, hence, is nullified. However, saying that I will enter Paradise is different. For this matter is unknown to me and can only be hoped for. He [Abu al-Anṣārī] said that he who advocates the first saying clings to certain notions, for example, that Iman is lifelong worship. It is like a single act of

obedience in which the soundness of its early stages depends on the success of its final outcome. This is also the case with regard to prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. It has also been said that there is no doubt that such a man is not to be called a friend of Allah, blessed, or acceptable to Allah at the present time. Similarly, the unbeliever is not to be called Allah's enemy or a villain at the present time, except in the sense that he may be judged as an enemy in order to show him that he himself is an enemy. [Their argument is that he may convert from unbelief to Iman before his death, but what is correct is that Allah's favor and wrath are based on one's deeds, as will become clear below].

What has been mentioned no doubt reflects the views of Ibn Kullāb, al-Asharī and his followers, and supporters of his view from among the followers of Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], Mālik, al-Shāfiʿī, and others. However, most people say that if a man is an unbeliever, then he is an enemy of Allah, but if he believes in Allah and becomes righteous, then he will be a friend of Allah. Allah says: "Oh, you who believe! Take not My enemies and yours as friends [or protectors] offering them your love, while they have disbelieved and what has come to you of the Truth and have driven out the Messenger and yourselves because you believe in Allah, your Lord! If you have come forth to strive in My Cause and to seek My Good Pleasure. You show friendship to them in secret, while I am All-Aware of what you conceal and what you reveal. And whosoever of you [Muslims] does that, then indeed he has gone astray, from the Straight Path. Should they gain the upper hand over you, they would behave to you as enemies and stretch forth their hands and their tongues against you with evil, and they desire that you should disbelieve. Neither your relatives nor your children will benefit you on the Day of Resurrection. He will judge between you. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do. Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people: 'Indeed, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allah, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you, hostility and hatred forever, until you believe in Allah alone,' except the saying of Abraham to his father: 'Indeed, I will ask for forgiveness [from Allah] for you, but I have no power to do anything for you before Allah.' 'Our Lord! in You [Alone] we put our trust and to You [Alone] we turn in repentance, and to You [Alone] is [our] final Return. Our Lord! Make us not a trial for the disbelievers, and forgive us, Our Lord! Indeed, You, only You, are the All Almighty, the All Wise.' Certainly, there have been in them an excellent example for you to follow, for

those who look forward to [the meeting with] Allah [for the reward from Him], and the Last Day. And whosoever turns away, then indeed, Allah is Rich, Worthy of All Praise. Perhaps Allah will grant love [and friendship] between you and those whom you [now] hold as enemies. For Allah has power [over all things]; and Allah is Often Forgiving, Most Merciful" (60:1–7). Indeed, this is what happened with the people of Makkah. Before Makkah was conquered, they were the enemies of Allah and His Messenger. But subsequently, the majority of them became believers and friends of Allah and His Messenger. In fact, Ibn Kullāb and his followers based their argument on the notion that wilāyah, *friendship,* is an eternal characteristic of Allah's essence, which includes will, love, goodwill, favor, and the like. Hence, it means a constant, unchanging will after death. This is a consequence of Allah's knowledge. For if Allah knows that someone will die as a believer and continue to be a friend of Allah, He wants him to enter Paradise. A similar principle is applicable to the enemy of Allah [i.e., if Allah knows that he will be an unbeliever at the time of death, he will remain an enemy of Allah; for Allah continues to want him to enter Hell].

The public, however, said that although friendship implies love for Allah and pleasing Him, while enmity implies hatred for Allah and incitement of His wrath, Allah is nevertheless pleased with someone and loves him after he becomes a believer and does righteous deeds. However, He is angered and displeased if a man reverts to unbelief. Allah says: "This is because they followed that which called forth the wrath of Allah, and they hated Allah's good pleasure . . ." (47:28). In this verse, Allah mentions that one's deeds call forth His wrath. He also says: "When at length they provoked Us, We exacted retribution from them . . ." (43:55). Qur'ānic exegetes have interpreted the clause, "when at length they provoked Us," to mean, "when they enraged Us [or made Us angry]." Allah also says: ". . . If you are grateful, He is pleased with you . . ." (39:7).

In the authorized ḥadith in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* recorded on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, from the Prophet (pbuh), who said: "Allah Almighty says: Whoever takes a friend of mine as an enemy, has challenged Me to wage war on him. And the best way in which a man can draw nearer to Me is to perform the obligations that I have laid upon him. My servant continues to draw nearer to Me through supererogatory acts of piety in order that I may love him. And if I love him, I will be the hearing by which he hears, the eyes by which he sees, the hand with which he fights, and the legs on which he walks. Through me he hears, he sees, he fights,

and he walks. If he asks anything of Me, I will give it to him, if he takes refuge in Me, I will protect him, and there is nothing from which I recoil more from than taking the soul of a believer; he hates death, while I hate to cause him offense. Yet death is his inevitable end."

Allah says that a man seeks to draw near to Him through supererogatory acts of obedience so that He will love him. Then He says, "If I love him I will be such and such." Thus, it is clear that Allah's love comes after the person's performance of deeds that call forth His love. And the Qur'ān supports this. Allah says: "Say [Oh Muḥammad]: If you do love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you all your sins. . ." (3:31). His saying, "Allah will love you" is the result clause following the conditional, "if you do love Allah, follow me." This is, indeed, their reward for the act of following the Messenger. Allah rewards them by loving them. And as is known, the reward for a deed and the effect of a cause do not occur until after the deed is done and the cause takes effect. This is, indeed, similar to His saying: "Call on Me; I will answer your prayer . . ." (40:60). It is also similar to His saying: "Oh, our people, hearken to the one who invites you to Allah, and believe in Him: He will forgive you your faults and deliver you from a Grievous Penalty" (46:31); and "Oh, you who believe! Fear Allah, and always say a word directed to the Right. That He may make your conduct whole and sound and forgive you your sins . . ." (33:70–71); and ". . . So fulfill your engagements with them to the end of their term: For Allah loves the righteous" (9:4); and ". . . Why say you that which you do not do? Grievously hateful is it in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not do. Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure" (61:2–4). Allah speaks these words after the people told the Prophet (pbuh) that if they knew the deed that Allah loves most, they would perform it. Allah also says: "The unbelievers will be addressed: Greater was the aversion of Allah to you than [is] your aversion to yourselves, seeing that you were called to the belief and you no longer refuse" (40:10), which indicates that His love and His aversion are due to their deeds, and that He loves them if they fear Allah and fight for His Sake. That is why He encourages them to perform such deeds, exactly in the same way He encourages them to do what He will reward them for. And the reward of a deed must follow the deed. His saying: ". . . Seeing that you were called to the Belief and you no longer refuse" (40:10) also indicates that Allah abhors them for rejecting the call to belief. Similar to this is His saying: "Allah's Good Pleasure is on the believers

when they swore allegiance to you under the tree: He knows what is in their hearts, and He sends down tranquility to them; and He rewards them with a speedy victory" (48:18). His saying, "Allah's pleasure is on the believers when they swore allegiance to you under the tree," indicates that Allah's Good Pleasure is on the believers after they swore allegiance. For an effect cannot occur before its cause and hence, if Allah's Good Pleasure is on the believers, then this did not occur until after they had sworn allegiance.

This is supported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ,* in which we read that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah asks the people of Paradise: 'Oh, people of Paradise, are you pleased?' They answer: 'Oh, our Lord, how could we not be pleased when you have granted us what you did not grant to any of Your other creatures?' Allah replies: 'Do you want Me to grant you better than that?' They answer: 'Oh, our Lord, what else is better than that?' He says: 'I will grant you My good pleasure so that I will never be displeased with you again.'" This indicates that at that time, Allah granted them His Good Pleasure, which would never again be followed by His wrath. It also indicates that other forms of His approval might be followed by His displeasure or anger.

It is related in both *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* in the intercession ḥadith, that all the Messengers [except the Prophet Muḥammad, pbuh] said: "My Lord has been more angered than He ever has before, and more than He ever will again." Also, in the two Ṣaḥīḥs the Prophet (pbuh) expresses in more than one way that: "Allah's response to the repentance of His servant may be compared to a man traveling through a desert full of dangers and perils who loses his horse, which has been carrying his food and water. He looks for it [the horse] but he does not find it. He lies down to await death, and when he wakes up, what should he see but his horse before him with his food and water; Allah's joy over the repentance of one of His servants is like the joy of this man." In another version the Prophet (pbuh) said: "How would you describe His [Allah's] happiness?" They replied: "It will be very great, Oh, Messenger of Allah." He [the Prophet] answered: "Allah will be more pleased with the repentance of His servant than that man who found his horse." Similar to this is Allah's derisive laughter at two men, one of whom kills the other, yet both of them enter Paradise; or His laughter at the last person to enter Paradise, who said: "What! Are you mocking me though you are the Lord of the worlds?" Allah replies: "No, but I am capable of doing whatever I choose." [These comments are all found in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*].

In what is called duʿāʾ al-qunūt, *the prayer of reverence,* the worshiper said to Allah: "Please take me as your friend among those whom You have taken as your friends." Allah says: "My friend is Allah, Who revealed the Book and He also takes the Righteous for friends" (7:196); and ". . . And Allah takes for friends those who fear Him" (45:19). This friendship is due to their fear of Allah and their righteousness, and hence, could not have preceded their fear and righteousness, even though they have become righteous and godfearing due to Allah's Will, Power, Gracious Bounty, and Beneficence. Accordingly, Allah's taking them for friends is a consequence of their being righteous and fearing Him. Similar to this is Allah's mercy, of which the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The Merciful Allah will show His Mercy to the merciful for He is the Merciful. He is merciful toward people of the earth, in order that He who is in heaven [Allah] may show His Mercy to you." [Al-Tirmidhī said that this is a sound ḥadith]. Allah says: ". . . If you are grateful, He is pleased with you. . . ." (39:7). In this verse, Allah associates His Pleasure with their gratitude in the same way that reward is associated with an act, or as an effect is associated with its cause. It is well known that a reward always follows the act for which it is a reward. Allah also says: ". . . You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, with minds secure . . ." (48:27). This verse indicates that "Allah's will" will be in the future. He [Allah] also says: "Indeed, when He intends a thing, His Command is 'Be' and it is!" (36:82). This verse also indicates that if He [in the future] intends something, He will say: 'Be' and it will be. Allah also says: "And say: work [righteousness], and soon Allah will observe your work . . ." (9:105). Thus, He will observe their work [in the future] if they work [righteousness].

THE CONCEPT OF EXCEPTION ACCORDING TO AḤMAD IBN ḤANBAL

The second principle appealed to by those who considered it necessary to make the exception [the first of which was discussed in the beginning of this chapter] is that absolute Iman includes the performance of all that Allah commands and the abandonment of all that He prohibits. Hence if a man says, "I am a believer" [according to these considerations], then he testifies concerning himself that he is among the righteous and godfearing who perform all they are commanded to do and abandon all they are prohibited from doing. Hence, he is one of the friends of Allah. Indeed, this is a testimony concerning oneself about something he does not

know. If this testimony were true, then he would have to testify that he will enter Paradise if he dies in this state of belief. However, no one can testify to his [future] entrance into Paradise. For his testifying that he is a believer is the same as his testifying that he will enter Paradise if he dies in this state of belief. And this is, indeed, the basis on which the majority of the pious ancestors used to make the exception, although they made it permissible to omit the exception when Iman is spoken of in another sense. This will be discussed below, if Allah wills.

Al-Khallāl, in the *Book of the Sunnah,* related that Sulaymān Ibn al-Ashʿath [Abu Dāʾūd al-Sijistānī] said that he heard from Abu ʿAbd Allah Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal that a man came to him and said: "I was asked, 'Are you a believer?' I said: 'Yes, is there something wrong with that. Are not all people either believers or unbelievers?'" Whereupon Aḥmad became angry and said: "This is the argument of those who suspend all judgment concerning their spiritual status, leaving it in the hands of Allah." [That is, it is the attitude taken by the Murjiʾites.] Allah says: "There are [yet] others, held in suspense for the command of Allah . . ." (9:106). Then Aḥmad added: "Is not Iman both words and works?" The man answered: "Yes." Aḥmad replied: "Have you spoken the words?" "Yes," the man replied. Aḥmad said: "Have you done the works?" The man replied: "No." Aḥmad then said: "Then how can you object to saying, "if Allah wills" [making the exception] when you claim to be a believer?"

Abu Dāʾūd said that Aḥmad Ibn Abu Surayj told him that Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal wrote to him regarding this issue, saying that Iman is words and works; we have spoken the words but we have not done the works. Therefore, we make the exception regarding the works. Al-Khallāl mentioned this reply on the authority of al-Faḍl Ibn Ziyād, who said that he heard Abu ʿAbd Allah saying that Sulaymān Ibn Ḥarb[7] used to say that we perform the works but we do not know if Allah will accept them or not.

I said that Allah's acceptance depends on the performance of the work in the way Allah commands. Hence, if someone fears Allah as he performs a work, and if he does it in the way Allah commands, then Allah will accept his work. But he cannot

[7] Sulaymān Ibn Ḥarb, Abu Ayyub al-Wāshiḥī (?–244 A.H.), was a leading jurist, scholar of ḥadith, and a judge in Makkah. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 385.]

be absolutely certain that Allah will accept it because he is not certain whether he has perfected his work. Allah says: "Those who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear . . ." (23:60). [That is, they are afraid that their charity will not be accepted by Allah.] ʿĀʾishah once said: "Oh, Messenger of Allah, does the man who commits adultery, steals, and drinks wine fear Allah?" To this he [the Prophet] replied: "No, daughter of al- Ṣiddīq [the first Caliph, Abu Bakr], he is the man who prays, fasts, and gives charity and who fears that these deeds will not be accepted from him [by Allah]."

Al-Khallāl also related that Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī said that he heard Abu ʿAbd Allah saying that we have no choice but to make the exception. For if someone said, "he is a believer," then this means that he has uttered the necessary words but has not performed the works. Hence, the exception is to be made for the works.

Also, Isḥāq Ibn Ibrāhīm said that he heard Abu ʿAbd Allah saying: "Refer to the saying of Ibn Masʿūd concerning the exception with regard to Iman, that Iman is words and works, and works mean action. We have spoken the words but we fear that we have not fulfilled the works. Therefore, I prefer that one make the exception with regard to Iman by saying, 'I am a believer, if Allah wills.'" He [al-Khallāl] also said that he also heard Abu ʿAbd Allah being questioned about the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "We will follow you, if Allah wills." When asked to which part of the statement the exception applies, he answered that it applies to the location in which the Prophet would be buried. For he did not know whether he would be buried in that place or somewhere else.

It is also related that al-Maymūnī asked Abu ʿAbd Allah [i.e., Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] about his view on the statement: "Oh, say, I am a believer, if Allah wills, hoping that you are a believer," since he did not know if his works would be perfected and accepted or not. Such statements are found in abundance in the sayings of Aḥmad and others with similar views. This is also consistent with what has already been mentioned to the effect that the absolute believer is one who performs his obligations, and thus deserves Paradise if he dies in this state of belief. Similarly, he who does not perform his obligations and commits what is prohibited will not be called a believer. For the absolute believer is one who is righteous, godfearing, and a friend of Allah. Hence, if one says, "I am a believer," then it is exactly as if

he were to say, "without a doubt, I am righteous, godfearing, and a friend of Allah."

Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others of the pious ancestors used to hate to hear one man ask another: "Are you a believer?" They also used to hate the answer. For this is a heresy introduced by the Murjiʾites to defend their view that a man knows of himself that he is not an unbeliever. Rather, he finds that his heart believes in what the Prophet's message revealed. Therefore, by saying, "I am a believer," he proves that Iman is mere taṣdīq. For you are definite about your being a believer, but you cannot be certain about performing all you have been commanded to do. When the pious ancestors realized the Murjiʾites' intent, they would either avoid answering this question entirely, or elaborate on their answer. This is because the term Iman may be used either in an absolute or a conditioned sense. Thus, they used to answer by referring to Iman in the conditioned sense, which does not require that one testify that his Iman is perfect. Therefore, the correct view [of the three mentioned in this chapter] is that it is permissible to say, "I am a believer," without making the exception if he so chooses. However, this refers to the conditioned, not to the absolute, Iman. That is why Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] used to hate to answer with regard to the perfected Iman without making the exception.

Al-Marwazī said that Abu ʿAbd Allah [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] was once asked: "Should we say, 'we are believers'"? He replied: "Rather, we say 'we are Muslims.'" Al-Marwazī asked Abu ʿAbd Allah again: "Should we say 'we are believers'"? He replied that rather, "we say 'we are Muslims,'" although he did not criticize the person who omits the exception, as long as he does not mean to say, as the Murjiʾites did, that Iman is mere verbal testimony of belief. Rather, he omitted it because the exception may imply doubt, and he has no doubt about the presence of Iman in his heart, even if he is not absolutely sure about the perfection of his Iman.

Al-Khallāl said that Aḥmad Ibn Aṣram al-Muzanī told him that if Abu ʿAbd Allah was asked whether he was a believer, he would say, "your questioning is a heresy," since there was no doubt about his Iman. Or he would say, "we do not doubt our Iman." Al-Muzanī also said that he recalled that ʿAbu ʿAbd Allah said, "I say, as Ṭāwūs did, 'I believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers.'"

Al-Khallāl also said that Ḥarb Ibn Ismāʿīl[8] and Abu Dāʾūd told him that Abu Dāʾūd said he heard Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] saying that he [Aḥmad] heard Sufyān Ibn ʿUyaynah say that if one is asked, "are you a believer?" he should not answer, but say, "your question is heresy and I have no doubt about my Iman." He also said that if the person questioned says, "I am a believer, if Allah wills," then this exception is not to be considered as doubt. For he does not doubt the fact that what was revealed to the Messenger is the truth; in fact, he is quite certain of it. Rather, he doubts or is uncertain about whether he will keep performing the obligations for the rest of his life. Indeed, it has been revealed that Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] said that we do not have any doubts about our Iman, nor did the inquirer have doubts about the Iman of the person he questioned. Moreover, he was certain of his belief in what the Messenger came with [commands and prohibitions], but he was uncertain about his performance of his obligations.

It follows that Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and others of the pious ancestors used to speak definitively and unequivocally about the presence of Iman in the heart. However, they made the exception when referring to absolute Iman, which involves performing what is commanded. They also made it permissible to make the exception when referring to the practical aspect of Iman that one is not confident of fulfilling completely. This is, indeed, another consideration, although we have no doubts about the Iman in our hearts. For making the exception regarding things that we know to exist is supported by the Sunnah, due to the wisdom and prudence of such a practice.

Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥassan Ibn Hārūn reported that he asked Abu ʿAbd Allah [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] about making the exception with respect to Iman. The latter replied that yes, one must make the exception if he has doubts about his future works. Ibn Masʿūd and others also used to make the exception, which was consistent with the views of al-Thawrī. Allah says: ". . . You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills" (48:27). The Prophet (pbuh) also said to his Companions: "I hope I am the most godfearing of all of you." He also said about someone who had died: "He will be resurrected as a Muslim, if Allah wills." Accordingly, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] emphasized that he made the exception as a precaution lest

[8] Ḥarb Ibn Ismāʿīl, Abu Muḥammad al-Karmānī (?–280 A.H.), was a jurist and a disciple of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 387.]

he not complete certain works. For he feared that he could not fully perform what he had been commanded to do; hence, he made the exception despite the fact that he had no doubts about the belief in his heart. That is, he doubted the completion of the works, but not the essence of belief in his heart.

Al-Khallāl said that Muḥammad Ibn Hārūn[9] told him that when Ḥubaysh Ibn Sindī discussed this issue, he mentioned that Abu ʿAbd Allah [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] had cited the words of the Prophet (pbuh) as he stood beside the graves. The Prophet said: "If Allah wills, we will follow you." Thus, he knew that he was going to die. In the story of the person lying in the grave he said: "You lived as a Muslim, died as a Muslim, and will be resurrected as a Muslim, if Allah wills." The Prophet (pbuh) also said: "I have concealed my prayer, which will, if Allah wills, benefit whoever who does not associate partners with Allah." Someone once asked the Prophet (pbuh): "If one of us wakes up in the morning in a state of major ritual impurity, may he fast?" The Prophet (pbuh) said: "I do so and still fast." The inquirer then said: "But you are not like us. For Allah has forgiven all of your past and future sins." To this the Prophet (pbuh) replied: "I swear by Allah that I hope I will be the most godfearing of all of you." Indeed, there are many other ḥadiths that include the exception, which indicates that the exception is made not due to doubts; for he [the Prophet] made the exception although he was absolutely certain of the occurrence of the events of which he spoke.

He [Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal] also said that an old man once came before him and asked him about Iman. He replied that Iman is words and works, which may increase or decrease. The inquirer asked: "Could I say that so-and-so is a believer, if Allah wills?" He [Aḥmad] said: "Yes." The inquirer added: "They tell me that I am in doubt about it." Aḥmad replied: "What an evil thing they have said!" When the man started to leave, Aḥmad asked him to come back. He then asked him: "Do they not say that Iman is words and works, which increase and decrease?" The man said: "Yes." Aḥmad then said: "Then you should make the exception." The man said: "How so, Oh, Abu ʿAbd Allah?" Aḥmad replied: "Tell them that they claim that Iman is words and works; they have spoken the words but they have not performed the works. Hence, they ought to make the exception

[9] Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥassan Ibn Hārūn (?–308 A.H.) was a jurist, scholar of ḥadith, and a follower of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. [*Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 387.]

for the works." He was asked: "Should we make the exception for Iman?" "Yes," he said. "I say: 'I am a believer, if Allah wills.' But I make the exception with certainty, not based on what is doubtful." Then he noted that Allah says: ". . . You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills . . ." (48:27). In this verse Allah tells them that they would enter the Sacred Mosque, "if Allah wills," although He is sure that they would enter.

The Desirable Aspects of Exception and the Response to Those Who Disagree

In his statement, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] declared that he made the exception despite the fact that he was completely sure about his present state. He said it with his tongue, while his heart had no doubt about it. He made the exception because works are part of Iman and he was not entirely sure that he would complete his works; rather, he had some doubts regarding this matter. Hence, he negated his doubt and affirmed his certainty concerning what he was completely sure about. He also affirmed his doubt about the thing whose existence he had no certain knowledge of. He declared that it is desirable to make the exception in the latter case, which he did not know whether or not he had fulfilled. It is also permissible in matters one is completely sure about. That is, if one makes the exception about the Iman he has in his heart, it would be permissible, such as in the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "I swear by Allah that I hope I will be the most godfearing among you." This matter was already the case in the present, not the future; and since he was the most godfearing, he did not hope to become so in the future. Rather, his hope had to do with a present matter [i.e., at the time he uttered the saying]. Similarly, a believer hopes that if he performs a work, Allah will accept it from him, and he fears that He will not accept it. Allah says: "And those who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear do so because they will return to their Lord" (23:60). The Prophet (pbuh) said: "It is he who prays, fasts, and gives charity and still fears that Allah would not accept these from him." The acceptance is either a present or a past matter. And he [the one who hopes] hopes in Allah and fears Him. For a matter that has future consequences would be either praiseworthy or blameworthy; and a person makes either its good or its bad consequence more probable. It is said that a person places his hope in Allah and fears Him. Thus, the hope and the fear are associated with the present and the past. For the good and

bad consequences of an act are to happen in the future. Therefore, he hopes that Allah will accept his work, with the result that He will reward him and have mercy on him in the future. He also fears that Allah will not accept his work and hence, will not reward him. He likewise fears that Allah will put His curse on him for disobedience which would result in his being punished.

And if someone strives after what he seeks, like a merchant or a messenger whom he has sent on an errand that he is to accomplish in a certain period of time, then when this period of time comes to an end, he says, "I hope that so-and-so has completed the errand." The accomplishment of the task is past; however, the resulting joy or pleasure or other desired outcomes are in the future. And one says concerning the time when it is customary for pilgrims to enter Makkah, "I hope they have entered." And he might say of a body of troops that was sent out against unbelievers, "I hope Allah has given victory to the believers and granted them plentiful booty." And at the time of year when the Nile rises one might say, "I hope the Nile has risen." Likewise, someone who came to Egypt at this time might have said, "I hope the level of the Nile is high this year." To someone who owns land and would like it to rain, one might have said, "after it had rained in some parts, I hope the rain is widespread and I hope that such and such a piece of land has received rain." After all, what one hopes for is something whose presence will cause him to rejoice, while that which he dreads is something whose presence would cause him pain.

This is in turn related to knowledge; the knowledge of such things pertains to the future. For if the person referred to above knew that the Muslims had been victorious, that the pilgrims had entered Makkah, or that the rain had fallen, he would rejoice in such knowledge. Besides this, other desired outcomes would also occur. Otherwise, what he desires and seeks would not occur, in which case he would say, "I hope and I fear," since that which he desires or dreads is related to knowledge of it, which is itself a matter that is related to the knowledge of such events when they are still in the future. Similarly, those things that are sought through belief, such as happiness and salvation, are future matters, such that when one speaks of them, he should make the exception. This is because what is sought after by means of it is still in the future. Moreover, every future event that is desired or sought after is dependent on the will of Allah, even if one is certain of its occurrence; for apart from Allah's will, there would be no future whatsoever.

It follows that our saying, "this will happen, if Allah wills," is valid. For it will not happen unless Allah wills it. Both doubt and the utterance must be made depending on Allah's will. However, it is unnecessary that a suspended matter be doubtful. Rather, this doubt depends on the knowledge of the speaker. For, sometimes he is doubtful and other times he is not. And since doubts occur to him quite often due to his lack of knowledge about the consequences, one may think that doubt is included in its meaning. However, this is not true. For Allah's saying: ". . . You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills . . ." (48:27) connotes no doubt on the part of Allah, nor on the part of His Messenger or the believers. That is why Thaʿlab[10] said that this is an exception made by Allah, even though He has the knowledge [that they shall enter the Sacred Mosque]. Other people, however, make the exception for what they do not know. Abu ʿUbaydah and Ibn Qutaybah said that the Arabic particle "in," *if,* employed here means *when* or *because* (expressed with the particle idh). That is, what is meant here is, "when or because Allah wills." What they intended by this was to affirm the action with the particle "in," *if,* just as it would be affirmed with idh. The particle idh is an adverb of time whereas "in," *if,* is a particle that joins a dependent clause to an independent clause.

Someone might note that the Arabs say, "idhā, *when,* the unripe dates turn red, come to me," whereas they do not say, "in, *if,* the unripe dates turn red." In response, one could say that the intent here is to time the act of coming based on the time of the dates' ripening, in which case the coming would take place at a certain time that has actually been fulfilled. However, the particle "in," *if,* has nothing to with timing; rather, it is merely a conditional particle, which requires that the second action be bound to the first. Hence, a statement that would correspond to the situation at hand would be: "the green dates will become red and sweet, if Allah wills." And this is true.

Someone might say that there is a group of people who have rejected this sense of the word, and have adopted the practice of making the exception for matters that are subject to doubt. For example, the Qurʾānic verse that reads, "..You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills . . ." (48:27) was taken by al-Zajjāj to mean that

[10] Thaʿlab, Aḥmad Ibn Yaḥyā al-Shaybānī Abu al-ʿAbbās (?–291 A.H.), was a famous authority on Arabic grammar and ḥadith. He wrote the well-known *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*. [*Al-Fihrist*, vol. 2, p. 1110 and *Kitab al-Iman* MZ, p. 390.]

Allah commands them to enter the Sacred Mosque. It has also been said that the use of the exception is due to fear and a concern for safety; in other words, the meaning of the saying is, "may you enter safely." As to whether they will enter, however, this is an event that is not subject to doubt. According to another interpretation of the saying, it means, "may either all or some of you enter," since Allah knew that some of them would die; hence, the exception was used because not all of them would enter. It has been noted that due to their futile distortion of the actual intent of the words of the Qur'ān, proponents of all of these interpretations have succumbed to the very notion they had rejected. Consider, for example, those who interpret the verse to mean that Allah commands them to enter the Sacred Mosque. They hold that Allah already knew whether He would command them to do so or not; for His knowledge that He would command them to enter is like His knowledge that they would enter. In this way they have made the exception dependent on a meaning that is not conveyed by the words themselves. Moreover, Allah's knowledge is related both to that which is manifest and that which is concealed. Similarly, with respect to their fear and concern for safety, Allah knows whether they will enter safely or fearfully, and in fact He declares that they will enter safely, knowing that they would do so. Hence, neither of these occurrences were subject to doubt according to Allah nor, for that matter, in the mind of His Messenger. As for those who understand the verse to mean that either some or all of them would enter, they hold that that which depends on the divine will is the entrance of those referred to in this saying. That is, if reference was made to all of them, then all of them would undoubtedly go in; and if reference was being made to the majority, then the entrance of these was what hung on the divine will. As for that which is not referred to, it may not be made conditional with the use of the particle "in," *if;* rather, the particle employed would be inna, *that,* which would indicate an unequivocal promise.

ʿUmar [Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb] said to the Prophet (pbuh) on the day of the Battle of Ḥudaybiyyah: "Did you not used to tell us that we would come to the Kaʿbah and do a circle around it?" The Prophet replied: "Yes, I did. But did I tell you that you would come to it this year?" "No," ʿUmar replied. "So then," said the Prophet, "you will certainly come to the Kaʿbah and make the circle around it."

Someone might ask why he [the Prophet] did not make any of the other promises mentioned in the Qur'ān dependent on Allah's will. The reason for this is that this verse was revealed after the Prophet (pbuh) came back from Ḥudaybiyyah. They

had made the minor pilgrimage that year and had striven to enter the Sacred Mosque, but the polytheists prevented them from doing so. So they returned with hearts full of grief, the depth of which no one but Allah knows. They were waiting for the fulfillment of this promise that year. For the Prophet (pbuh) had promised them unconditionally that this would take place. And it is said that in his sleep he saw someone who said: "You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills." In the morning he told people about his vision and ordered them to go on a minor pilgrimage. However, they could not make the minor pilgrimage that year, and this verse was revealed. In this verse, Allah promises them the same thing the Messenger promised them. The clause, "if Allah wills" was intended to certify that they would indeed enter the Sacred Mosque and that Allah would fulfill His promise. Similarly, if a man is absolutely determined to do something, he would say, "I swear by Allah that I will do so and so, if Allah wills." Indeed, he says, "if Allah wills," not because he is in doubt about his ability or desire to do so, but to certify and assure that he will do it. For he fears that, if he does not say, "if Allah wills," his determination might be thwarted and he will not achieve what he desires. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* relate that Sulaymān (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "I swear by Allah that I will make the rounds among a hundred women tonight; each one will give birth to a child who will become a horseman who fights in the Cause of Allah." When his friend told him to say, "if Allah wills," Sulaymān did not say it. And none of them gave birth except one who bore a dwarf, a male child split in two. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "I swear by Him Whose hand is my soul, if he had said, "if Allah wills," the women would have given birth to children all of whom would have become horsemen and fought for the Cause of Allah. Accordingly, if he had said, "if Allah wills," this would not have meant that he doubted what he sought and desired. Rather, it would have been to certify that Allah would help him to fulfill it. For nothing happens unless Allah wills it. So if a man swears that he will do something but does not say, "if Allah wills," then his desire will not be fulfilled. For if anyone swears by Allah without saying, "if Allah wills," Allah will prove him wrong.

Some have been asked: "By what have you come to know your Lord?" They said: "By the way in which He nullifies people's resolutions and thwarts their ambitions." Allah says: "Nor say of anything, 'I shall be sure to do so and so tomorrow' without adding, 'if Allah wills . . .'" (18:23–24). For his saying, "I will do," implies both seeking and informing. What he seeks is certain; however,

whether it takes place or not depends on whether he wills it, and his seeking of the action must come from Allah by His might and power. So, in his request, he must request what he seeks from Allah; and when informing, he must only report what Allah has shown him. Accordingly, if he decides something without making the matter conditional on Allah's will, then he will be like the person who swears by Allah without saying, "if Allah wills." Then Allah will prove him to be a liar, determined to do something he desires, without hesitation. Therefore he must say, "if Allah wills," in order to achieve his desire, which he swore to fulfill. For his desire will not be fulfilled unless Allah wills it, but not due to hesitation in his will. Indeed, Allah wants to fulfill what He promises them, and His Will is firm and without hesitation. Moreover, whatever Allah wills, He does. For whatever He wants to be done will be done, unlike the human being, who wants what he will achieve and sees happening to him what he does not want.

His saying, "if Allah wills," certifies that what He promises will most definitely be fulfilled by His desire and will. For what He wants and desires will be achieved, and what He does not want will never happen. Hence, the exception is made here for the purpose of reassurance, since what they had been promised that year had not taken place. However, this was not the case for all other promises they had been given.

Accordingly, there has been a dispute and controversy among Muslim jurists about the person who makes the exception in an oath, although he is not hesitant and has a firm desire to achieve his goal. Is such a man excused for having made the exception, or must he do penance if he breaks his word? As for the person who is hesitant and who must make the exception, he does so without a doubt. Indeed, the correct view is that in all cases one ought to make the exception because Allah's will encompasses everything, and because no matter how firm one's own will is, it still depends on the will of Allah. So he may be definite about his will to achieve his goal, but he is uncertain that his desire will be fulfilled, nor does he want it to be fulfilled if Allah has predestined it not to take place. For he has made the commitment to fulfill it only if Allah wills it; and if Allah does not want it to be achieved, this person would not make the commitment and he would not swear by Allah to achieve it even if he had a firm desire. For not everything that one desires does he swear by Allah to achieve, and in such a case, no penance or atonement is required if one fails to achieve it.

What has been mentioned above makes clear that one should say, "if Allah wills," to gain one's full desire and will to achieve his goal, not because he has doubts about his will. This is applicable to what a man desires and swears to achieve. Allah says: ". . . You shall enter the Sacred Mosque . . ." (18:27). This is a report of what He wants to be done and that which He knows will happen. Allah makes their entrance into Makkah dependent on His will by saying, "if Allah wills." This is also the case regarding something that one wants to report regarding a future action he is completely sure of his intent to achieve. Hence, he says, "if Allah wills," to achieve his goal, but does not say it due to doubts about his will or about its occurrence.

Accordingly, the exception is to be made when there is a full desire and strong will to achieve a goal. However, one may still fear that his goal will not be achieved; thus, he says, "if Allah wills," to achieve his hope, even though he knows that it will happen. He also asks and prays to Allah to help him achieve the aim he knows will be fulfilled, as in the case of the Prophet (pbuh) on the day of the Battle at Badr. The Prophet (pbuh) told his people that they would defeat the polytheists, although he entered the tent to ask for divine aid, saying: "Oh Allah, please fulfill what you have promised me." For the knowledge of what Allah has decreed does not prevent His Decree from taking place as a result of causes, one of the greatest of which is supplication. Likewise, hope in His Mercy and fear of His Punishment could be among the most important causes of someone's deliverance from His Punishment and achieving His Mercy.

The exception is made for a simple declaration of fact, as well as for a statement of fact accompanied by a request. The first refers to when one swears to the truth of a declarative statement the intent behind which is neither to incite someone else to action or to forbid him to act. Rather, one would respond to such a statement by either believing or disbelieving it. For example, one might say, "I swear, the matter is thus and so, if Allah wills," or, ". . . it is not thus and so . . . ." The person making the exception may know for certain that what he says is true, as in the statement, "you shall enter," for this is a clause that has not been omitted. The second situation—that is, a statement of fact that conveys the sense of a request—is illustrated in the statement, "I swear that I will do thus and so," or, "I swear that I will not do thus and so." The wording is that of a declarative statement that is guaranteed by a request. The person did not say, "I swear, I desire this, but am not determined to do it." Rather he said, "I swear it will be thus and

so." For if it were not "thus and so," then he would have broken his word due to the event that occurred in a manner inconsistent with what he had sworn to. But if he were to say, "if Allah wills," then he would be swearing with the provision, "provided that Allah wills it," rather than doing so in an unqualified manner.

For this reason, many Muslim jurists held that if something to which one swears does not come to pass, or if it does come to pass but the person does not do what he swore to do, he has broken his oath, whether out of forgetfulness, error, or ignorance. For they noted that an oath bears the sense of a report, such that if what occurs conflicts with the report a person has given, then he has broken his word. However, others have held that such a statement aims to incite others to action or forbid them from some action; and if someone forbids a certain action, then does it out of forgetfulness or error, he has not broken his word.

Early [scholars] held that such an utterance might bear the sense of affirming or denying some fact, as when someone says, "I swear by Allah, it is going to rain [or not going to]." This is a sheer declaration of fact that implies no command or prohibition. But if one swore to what he believed [to be the case], and if the matter turned out to be in conflict with what he had sworn to, then he would have broken his word. In this way one may see the distinction between swearing to something that is past, and swearing to something in the future. For an oath pertaining to the past is not such that if one makes a mistake with regard to it, he is not required to do penance or make atonement in any way, as one would had he committed deliberate perjury. This is not so, however, with regard to the future, for one is not required to make the exception concerning the future if he has done it. Allah says: "The unbelievers think that they will not be raised up [for Judgment]; say 'Yes, by my Lord, you shall surely be raised up: Then shall you be told [the truth] of all that you did. And that is easy for Allah'" (64:7). In this verse, Allah calls the Prophet to swear concerning a future matter. Similar is His saying, "The unbelievers say, 'never to us will come the Hour.' Say, No! But most surely, by my Lord, it will come upon you . . ." (34:3). Allah also calls him to witness concerning a present matter when He says: "They seek to be informed by you: Is that true? Say, Yes! By my Lord! It is the very truth . . ." (10:53). The Prophet (pbuh) said: "I swear by Him in whose Hand is my soul, that the son of Mariam will be sent down as a just arbiter and fair-minded leader." He [the Prophet] also said: "I swear by Him in whose Hand is my soul; life will not come to an end before a time comes wherein the murderer does not know why he has murdered, and the slain does not

know why he was killed." The Prophet (pbuh) also said: "Kisrā [a title of Persian kings], shall perish until there are no more after him, and if Caesar dies, there will be no Caesar after him. I swear by Him in whose Hands is my soul, the wealth of Kisrā and Caesar will be spent for the sake of Allah." [Both of these ḥadiths are found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.] Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) was called to witness with a vow concerning future matters in different ḥadiths without making the exception; and, indeed, Allah knows best. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds, and peace be upon our Prophet Muḥammad and his family and his Companions.

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